FLYING SAUCER REVIEW

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THE "BENT HEADLIGHT BEAMS" CASE REVISITED

See page 2

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THE ROAD AHEAD

MANY folk, all around the world, who take an interest in the so-called "UFO Phenomenon", have already perceived for themselves the total uselessness of wasting time and resources and energy on the cataloguing of "flyovers", "lights in the sky", etc. However huge our pile of such material, it will never tell us anything about what lies behind our "Phenomenon".

In any case, we already *know* what lies behind it! The only things that we do not know, and need to know, are (1) how many alien factions or species are involved and (2) what their respective intentions are. Not a few of our more intelligent readers have indicated that in their view enough is already known! If so, the 64-billion-dollar question is: where do we go from there? It will be interesting to receive from our readers a wider range of opinions on this point.

But we also have a time-factor that will need to be considered. Here in Britain, at least one-half, and possibly many more than one-half, of our entire population have apparently no dearer wish than to be incorporated into the Soviet Police Empire — and a salutary and richly deserved experience that will surely be, and one that will give them something to think about for a long, long time to come. So perhaps FSR can be expected to have two or three more years to run, since there can be no possible doubt regarding the USSR's "capacity to oblige". In that brief span readers may at least be sure that we shall endeavour to put into print as much of the material as we can safely handle. Indeed most of what needs to be said will by then most probably have been said.

THE "BENT HEADLIGHT BEAMS" CASE REVISITED

Bill Chalker, BSc.(Hons.), FSR Consultant. © 1984

This article first appeared in *UFO Research Australia Newsletter* (UFORAN), Vol. 5, No. 3 (May-June 1984), Editor Vladimir Godic, P.O. Box 229, Prospect, South Australia 5082, and is reproduced here with the permission of our Consultant Mr. Bill Chalker and of Mr. Vladimir Godic. Previous accounts of the bent headlights case have already been given in FSR 12/3 and 12/5 (1966), 13/4 (1967), and 19/4 (1973). — EDITOR

EVER since I became deeply involved in investigating and researching UFO events in Australia, one remarkable event has held a particular fascination for me, namely the incident that became known as the "bent headlight beams case". It took place on April 4, 1966, at Burkes Flat, Victoria.

Despite its extraordinary nature, it has never been written up extensively in the literature other than in accounts largely based on newspaper stories and cursory investigations by civilian groups of the day.[1]

The event is largely unique in the annals of ufology simply because it speaks of the headlight beams of a car being "bent" in the presence of a UFO. The only other cases I am aware of are those in which a searchlight appears to "bend" near a UFO on film (Norwood, Ohio, U.S.A., on October 23, 1949)[2] and a torch light bent, or reflected, during a spectacular UFO episode near Taizé in France.[3]

Other aspects of the case describe a physical trace (a depression) in the field where the "UFO" sat and a, perhaps related, car fatality at the same spot.

Because of my specific interest in this event, and my specialist research activity with the Australian Physical Evidence Study Group (APESG), I resolved to undertake an exhaustive retrospective investigation.

What follows is the result of that investigation. For the first time in the UFO literature, the original area newspaper accounts are given; an interview with the original witness is presented and hitherto unknown aspects of the case are described. For the first time, the actual sequence of the UFO behaviour, and alleged "light bending", is described and illustrated.

At the very least, this extraordinary episode in Australian UFO history has been given the extensive exposure it deserves. If there are any researchers with further data about this case, they are invited to present them within these pages and thereby facilitate further enlightenment about this most puzzling case.

April 4, 1966, ca. 1950 hrs, Burkes Flat, Victoria, Australia

Mr. Ron Sullivan (38), a steel construction businessmen from Maryborough, was travelling at 60 mph, and approaching St Arnaud, when, in the distance, he noticed a light in a field. At first he thought it was a tractor.

"Suddenly my headlights pulled hard over to the right for some unaccountable reason. Instead of lighting the road, they lit up the fence as though they were being attracted by a magnet. I braked as hard as I could and glanced over to the right. In the middle of the paddock was a column of coloured light about 25 feet high and shaped like an ice-cream cone. It would have been about 3 feet wide at the bottom and 10 feet wide at the top." (From the *Melbourne "Sun"*, Tuesday, April 12, 1966.)

"I saw) ... not far away, a brilliant white disc of about 3 feet in diameter. The object was hovering just above the ground and, from its upper surface, it projected a conical array of shimmering rainbow lights extended to a height of about 15 feet. Then suddenly the coloured cone rose to a height of 20 feet and the disc below climbed above it. In the next moment the whole light complex vanished." (From *"AFSR & AUFOR"*.)

"The headlights of my car were suddenly diverted to the right for no apparent reason — and had I followed them I would have run off the straight stretch of road.

"Just then I saw a display of gaseous lights in all the colours of the spectrum in a nearby paddock. The object rose about ten feet in the air. It later disappeared.

"The coloured gaseous lights seemed to be going through 2″ to 3″ diameter tubes which led into a bright phosphorous looking light on the ground. The lights were stretching upwards all the time until they disappeared after leaving the white phosphorous looking light on the ground." (From a letter by Mr. Sullivan to *VFSRS, "AFSR"*, Victorian edition, 1966.)

With his car headlights bending away from the road, Mr. Sullivan thought he was driving in that direction and, with a quick reflex action, steered the car in the opposite direction. He suddenly found himself driving off the road and it was only his presence of mind and skill that saved him from an accident.

As the light complex rose from the ground without a sound, the car's headlights returned to normal and

focused on the road. When Sullivan arrived in Wycheproof, he checked his lights and they were operating perfectly.

Back in Maryborough, Mr. Sullivan told his wife and Hugh Hunter, a reporter, of his experience and it was arranged that Hunter and Sullivan would visit the site on April 7.

On the night prior to this visit, April 6, 19-year-old Gary Taylor was killed when his car left the road and collided with a tree, in the same spot where Sullivan had started to leave the road two nights before. A motorist travelling about half a mile behind Mr. Taylor, alleged that Taylor had swerved suddenly off the road for no apparent reason. The accident occurred at about 10 p.m.

During the following afternoon, Sullivan and Hunter went to the spot and found a saucer-shaped impression, about 70 yards from the roadway in a bare paddock. The impression, 3 feet across and 5 inches deep, was cleanly scooped out of the sandy soil without any debris around. There were no human or animal tracks around the area.

Although investigating police were at a loss to explain the fatal accident, or the sighting, it was rumoured that they had gathered other supporting evidence.

The above details are basically as the account was known, and became known, in the UFO literature. Because of the intriguing nature of the incident, the author (BC) sought to uncover all the contemporary documentation extant, but little publicised at the time, conduct a detailed retrospective investigation, field investigation, and interview with the original percipient. These objectives were largely achieved and some of the results are included here:

This is the full account from the *"Maryborough Advertiser"*, of Wednesday, April 13, 1966, pg. 5: "THE CASE OF THE DIVERTED HEADLIGHT BEAMS" — WHAT CAUSED THIS PHENOMENON!:

"Reports received in the past week tend to indicate that strange things have been happening in this area of Victoria. Strangest of all was the case of the turned headlight beams.

"The *'Advertiser"* was told last Wednesday night that a local man, while driving in the Burkes Flat area on the previous Monday night, had found that his headlight beams had diverted to the right 'almost as though drawn by a magnet'.

"The man, Mr. R. F. Sullivan, was driving along a straight stretch of sealed roadway on the Dunolly-St. Arnaud Road near Burkes Flat when the headlight beams moved to the right and illuminated the fence. The car continued straight. The lights were diverted for only a short time.

"Mr. Sullivan said that before the beams diverted they flickered in similar manner to that of a television screen when interference takes place.

Coloured Lights

"He said he looked across into the paddock, and, at what appeared to be a short distance from the fence, was a display of gaseous lights — 'all the colours of the spectrum'. He did not stop but glanced at the paddock as often as he could while driving, and the last he saw was the lights about 20 feet from the ground. The lights appeared to move rapidly up and down in a narrow area. When he reached St. Arnaud he checked the light fittings and found them to be normal.

"He continued his journey to the northern area of the State and told the *'Advertiser'* of his experiences when he returned on Wednesday.

"On Good Friday afternoon Mr. Sullivan and Mr. H. Hunter of the *'Advertiser'* visited the scene where the phenomenon had occurred. Mr. Sullivan had said he could pinpoint the spot.

Fatal Accident at Same Spot

"In the meantime a fatal accident had occurred near Burkes Flat on Thursday night, a 19-year-old youth was killed when his car left the roadway and struck a tree.

"Mr. Sullivan had said the spot was roughly about a mile from a brick home and dam. One stop was made prior to reaching the correct one, but he soon said he was not in the area where his lights had moved. The drive then continued until Mr. Sullivan passed a brick home with a dam beside it. He continued for about a mile and then said he was at the spot.

"After parking the car Messrs. Sullivan and Hunter decided to enter the paddock to see if there were any marks where he had seen the coloured lights on the previous Monday night.

"It was only then that it was found that the car was parked 20 feet from a tree against which a car had crashed. This was the tree struck by a car driven by Gary Taylor, of Carnegie, on Thursday night. Taylor was killed in the crash.

Coincidence

"Was it coincidence that the accident occurred at the same spot where, a few nights before, the lights of Mr. Sullivan's car had 'been drawn to the right as though by a magnet'? Mr. Sullivan's lights had moved to the right; the tree against which Taylor's car had crashed was just at the left edge of the road.

"In view of the coincidence the matter was reported to Bealiba police who are handling the accident investigations.

"The driver of a car which had been following Taylor's car at a distance of about a mile saw nothing unusual. There appeared to be no reason for Taylor to swerve.

Depression

"When Messrs Sullivan and Hunter examined the adjacent paddock on Friday the only unusual thing found was a depression in the fallowed ground. This was a little over 3 feet in diameter and only a few inches in depth. It looked odd in the fallow.

"A check with the property owner has shown that the depression was not in the ground when he finished fallowing. There were no foot or paw prints around it — just a bare impression in the ploughed ground...

"During the weekend several people visited the Burkes Flat area to have a look at the area where Mr. Sullivan had seen the coloured lights and where his headlight beams had been diverted. No one could offer an explanation nor could they decide what had caused the depression in the paddock.

"(Footnote — Mr. H. Hunter of the *'Advertiser'* said yesterday he believes that Mr. Sullivan saw something very strange at Burkes Flat on Monday of last week — so strange that Mr. Sullivan felt obligated to report it to police although all along he did not want his name mentioned. It was only on Monday, under persuasion from Mr. Hunter, that Mr. Sullivan would allow his name to be used. Certain exaggerations have occurred in reporting the incident elsewhere, but they have the main facts correct ... — Ed. *Maryborough Advertiser*.)

In the April 15, 1966, edition of the *"Maryborough Advertiser"*, pg 8, the editor replied to a letter to him, suggesting a meteor for the Burkes Flat incident:

"There was no sign of any burning in the immediate area where Mr. Sullivan saw the lights. There were some signs on the other side of the road where tree branches had been burned. The depression which has received so much publicity gave no indication of burning."

In a recent interview with the author (BC), along with David Reneke and Michael Hough, Ron Sullivan recalled the strange experience. It should be pointed out that predictably, after such a long period of time, some of the quantitative details were either inconsistent with the original accounts or in error. However, the qualitative aspects of the account still stand as largely in keeping with the original version:

RON SULLIVAN: I was going up to Wycheproof. I had a general steel fabrication factory at Maryborough at the time and I was going up to one of my job sites and, whilst travelling on the St. Arnaud Rd, at a place called Burkes Flat, at 8 p.m. ... it was a clear night ... it wasn't moonlight ... you could see the stars...

I was driving on a straight stretch of road ... near Burkes Flat. I noticed there was another vehicle behind me ... I never took any notice (of it).

Then, all of a sudden, in front of me, about 200 yards (away), I noticed a light on the ground in a paddock, 25 ... 20 yards from the fence ... I wasn't really surprised at it. At first viewing it, it seemed like the back light of a tractor in the field.

Anyway I got close to it ... it wasn't a brilliant light — a white phosphorous glow — then it came to a rather brilliant light not that there was enough brilliance to blind you, because it was a white light ...

As I closed off near it, I noticed the headlights of my car sort of bent towards it ... like a giant magnet, pulling the headlights on the car off course. I was quite surprised. Everything happened within say 2 minutes ... 1½ minutes.

As I got opposite, I noticed with all the confusion with the headlights going, the right-hand side of the road lighting up ... (as if I) was heading towards the fence, which I virtually wasn't. I pulled over to the left. I was going too close. I saw the trees on the left-hand side of the road. So I kept on going.

But also in that time when I first saw the light, it was just like a brilliant oval on the ground — white phosphorous type light in the ground, approximately 15 feet in diameter. Then it opened up and there was another white oval on top of it, about 30 feet (in) height, coming down making the shape of a cone (with) 15 feet bottom diameter and 20 feet top diameter — and in that cone were tubes of coloured lights — all the lights as you see as you look through the spectrum ("all the colours of the rainbow") ... red, blue, indigo and purple ... travelling up and down ... or they seem to be ... from the small oval to the bigger oval at the top. They were going up and down in shafts.

Then gradually the top seemed to come to meet the bottom ... They seemed to close in, and as they closed in, just making a transition of one light oval — similar to first view — everything then just disappeared.

BILL CHALKER: It went down then just disappeared?

RON SULLIVAN: The top came to the bottom. It came down, yes. First of all, there was the light on the ground, approximately 15 foot diameter. Then another light came on top, a bigger diameter, making a cone. Then the cone shrunk to a transition of one light again on the ground and that was the end of it.

BILL CHALKER: What was the last thing you saw?

RON SULLIVAN: Just a spot in the ground — a light spot, becoming smaller and smaller, to nothing ... I was sort of confused. (But) I wasn't scared or anything.

BILL CHALKER: What was the total duration of that sequence?

RON SULLIVAN: Oh, I would say about three-quarters of a minute. That's a pretty long time, not very long, but it's quite a time.

BILL CHALKER: Did you slow down to look?

RON SULLIVAN: I slowed down ... I didn't stop, but I slowed down to about 5 mph and, of course, at the time, I never thought about that other car behind

me and I looked behind, I couldn't see a thing. I put my head out (the driver's window) and around. I said, what in bloody hell was that? I kept on going and thought, and thought after a little while, it's something wrong with me, but I was convinced there was nothing wrong. There was no hallucination. I've never had hallucinations anyway ...

I got up to the next town, got out and inspected the car, looked around it, looked at the headlights, checked everything. Everything seemed normal.

Anyway, I had to book into a motel at Wycheproof. At 9 I got to Wycheproof. I never mentioned anything. I just sat in my room and thought, what in hell was that? I just couldn't believe it. I never told anyone...

The next day, I'd done my business ... I went up to the farm where we were putting up prefabricated steel buildings. I mentioned to the farmer what had happened. He sort of sympathised with me ... "Something strange happened to me when I was driving up last night ... coloured lights in the paddock"! I said.

Anyway, I got back to Maryborough next day and got home. First thing I said to my wife, I said, "God, I had an experience last night you know".

DAVID RENEKE: How did you sleep that night?

RON SULLIVAN: No, I couldn't sleep ... it was impossible to sleep ... it was something you didn't know ... it worries you.

DAVID RENEKE: Did you have anything when you slowed down?

RON SULLIVAN: I never stopped.

DAVID RENEKE: Why was that?

RON SULLIVAN: I was a bit scared ... it did frighten me, yeah ... but it didn't frighten me that much ... it was unusual ..

Anyway, I got back home ... I told my wife. She sympathised with me. We heard on the news, the day after, a chap got killed there. I said, "gee, Burkes Flat.."

Anyway, I said I better do something about this, so I went up to the police station in Maryborough ... I reported it to the police. Of course, the police knew me. No way did they indicate, you know, that I was "letting off". They wanted to go right through ..

Hughie Hunter got to hear about it ... Hughie and I drove up there the next day and we see the accident right opposite where that light was. We found a depression in the paddock ... you could see the tree ... where the car hit ... you can see where all the bark is taken off it, all the broken glass and the wreckage, the headlights and everything ... that was where the chap was killed. His name was Gary Taylor, from Carnegie. And right opposite that tree, about 20 yards (in), we found this depression which was newly made ... (the paddock) was ploughed and fallowed ... had the rake over it just prior to sowing ... (it was all dirt in the paddock) (interview ends).

Further details were elicited from the author's enquiries — Sullivan was driving an XP Falcon Futura sedan car, light blue in colour. High beam was operating in the headlights. Sullivan estimated that his headlight "beams" had remained "bent" for between 10 to 20 seconds. He was quite familiar with the roads, having travelled along the same road as much as two or three times a week. Locals said at the time that all sorts of things have happened in the area, principally, ghostly experiences. These references mainly seemed to refer to accounts in "the early days". One story refers to a ghost coming out of a dam at Burkes Flat. Other accounts of "ghost lights" came from nearby Natte Yallock in 1911 and much earlier. To quote Ron Sullivan, who in turn was quoting the local lore, "Burkes Flat was haunted"!

During March 1978, Victorian investigator Paul Norman reported that, upon investigation of a reported "discoloured circular patch in a paddock on the Bendigo-St. Arnaud Road", in the Bealiba area, he verified that it was the same depression discovered by Ron Sullivan and Hughie Hunter, twelve years earlier, at the site of the "bent headlight beams incident" and the car fatality. Paul Norman stated that "the patch is precisely in line with the tree the car hit". Photos of the spot showed a distinct green circular patch "still visible twelve years after it was first discovered". This author (BC) visited the site in 1980 and, after careful lining up with photos, taken of the site back in 1966, could not confirm that a patch was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding paddock. However, the paddock was largely fallow with only stubble present. Samples were taken of the soil and analyses undertaken have, to date, not confirmed anything of significance.

At the same time (March 1978), Paul Norman indicated to local press (*Bendigo Advertiser,* 1978), that "a former service-station attendant" told him "that a driver, who had been following Taylor's car, had pulled in for petrol and told her he had seen bright lights near the scene of the accident".

More recently, in an article in the *MUFON UFO Journal,* December, 1983, No. 190, Paul Norman indicated that *VUFORS* had received a phone call, a few days after the original incident, from a motorist who alleged he had seen the UFO in the Burkes Flat paddock while driving in the opposite direction. Paul Norman also stated that another driver, ostensibly following Taylor, also saw the "UFO" and reported that it looked like the "lights" had "blinded" the unfortunate Taylor.

It is my hope that Paul Norman and *VUFORS* will publish a detailed account of their investigations into this extraordinary case.

A headlight, ostensibly retrieved from Taylor's car at this time by Paul Norman twelve years after the event, was studied by Dr. Geoff Stevens. However, the

poor condition of the artifact prevented it from being used to determine whether the car to which it belonged had been in the presence of a powerful electromagnetic field effect.

Conclusions

Ultimately, since so much time has passed, definitive conclusions about this provocative episode are impossible.

We can say with some certainty that some sort of extraordinary light display was present in the field near Burkes Flat. We can be equally reasonably certain that it was that phenomenon that produced the depression found.

We are certain that the perception of the "UFO" and apparent "bending" of the headlight beams was in response to the unusual light display in the field. *The mere fact that Mr. Sullivan almost had an accident, which would have had him colliding with the same tree that the unfortunate Gary Taylor hit, is indeed sobering. That argues for some sort of persuasive connection. The coincidence is, at the very least, extraordinary.*

However, did a UFO really bend Mr. Sullivan's car headlights? Certainly there were enough stimuli present to give him that profound impression.

An exhaustive investigation at the time might have been able to answer the question with some certainty. Now, after eighteen years, it is impossible to say.

We can deduce that, for the "effect" to have occurred, either water vapour, dust, or other particulate or airborne matter would need to be present in the air so that a beam could have been clearly resolved. Mr. Sullivan is not certain on this point but seems emphatic that beams were apparent. One could argue, with little evidence to confirm it, that the "illusion" was somehow created by the illumination of the car headlights of the surroundings (the road etc), not the perception of discrete beams.

It is frustrating not to be able to approach this case with certain facts. Assumptions, based on memory, are our only guides.

If it was argued that the "beam-bending" was an illusion, or misinterpretation of some sort, a consideration of possible mechanisms is required.

I guess one could weakly argue that stray•light reflections may have caused the perception of "beam-bending", but no evidence supports this. Equally, the concepts of "time gap", hypnagogic and hypnopompic imagery, or other illusions, seem inappropriate.[4]

One could argue that the UFO caused some sort of perceptual effect on Mr. Sullivan, causing him to think he saw the beams bend. This illusion could be variously deemed a genuine effect, caused by the object itself, or a prosaic perceptual effect created by its presence.

For example, the concepts of "flow-patterns" and "motion parallax" in driving may be relevant. When driving, the nature of the flow-pattern of the outside world is quite complex and it changes with the distance of fixation of the driver's eyes. If he watches the midground, the foreground rushes past him, the midground appears almost stationary, and the background appears to move in the same direction as the car's direction of travel. Indeed, everything appears to flow round the spot at which the observer is looking. The difference in movement, or relative flow-patterns, produces the motion parallax effects.

In the case of Ron Sullivan, one could argue that he became fixated on the "UFO" in the field, therefore, it becomes relatively stationary, the foreground seems to rush past him, i.e. including the near part of the headlight beams, and the background behind the UFO, possibly including the extremities of the headlight beams, appears to travel in the same direction of motion of the car. Therefore, due to the UFO becoming the "fixation point" of Sullivan's field of vision, the headlight beams suffer from a form of motion parallax that resolves itself into the illusion of the beams "bending", i.e. the nearest section of the "beams" seemingly fall back to the car in the direction of the "UFO" and the more distant sections of the beams largely move consistently with the car's motion. The "parallax" becomes more acute as the fixation angle of view, relative to the correct direction of travel, increases, i.e. reaching a maximum of 90° as Sullivan is directly opposite the light display in the field. The flow patterns and motion parallax, dicated by the fixation on the "light display", are then ended and the effect of the bent headlight beams ceases. Sounds plausible? Perhaps. However, I have read of no precedent in the psychological literature.[5] Has anyone else? So, the "psychological explanation" of fixated motion parallax while interesting, falls short of being provable. If any reader is aware of evidence or actual experience that confirms such a theory, the author would be most intrigued to hear of it.

What about the situation where we make the assumption that Mr. Sullivan's perceptions of the Burkes Flat experience were totally accurate?

If we accept, however tentatively, that the car headlights were discreetly resolved and, further, that the bizarre bending effect occurred, how then can we account for it? Apart from extreme misinterpretation we are seemingly left with "exotic" suggestions.

We "know" through Einstein's theories that light can be bent around bodies with massive gravitational fields.[6] This led early theorists to suggest that the Burkes Flat UFO was a body with a magnetic field like a "mini-sun". This is, at best, a crude analogy and one that does not sit well with the "facts". Unless one goes for a directed gravitational field resolved in a dis crete beam or line (one which is hitherto unknown to science), then the presence of an exotic intense gravity field should have had marked effects on Mr. Sullivan's vision, his well-being and the car itself, and also the

surroundings. Mr. Sullivan and his car emerged from the experience ostensibly unscathed. (Despite considerable efforts to locate the car, we were unsuccessful. A magnetic signature test would have been extremely interesting. We were able to examine the headlight of Taylor's car, but there was no evidence supporting the presence of an intense magnetic field.)

The only other suggestion with slightly more credibility than the wild suggestion of a "mini-sun" is that some sort of localised atmospheric "lens" effect, i.e. a discrete lens, was developed which acted as an interface with the incident headlight beams to bend through. This suggestion is, at least, partially compatible with the subjective geometry of the beam bending as perceived by Mr. Sullivan, i.e. as he drew closer to the spot on the road, opposite the light display in the field, the degree of bend became allegedly more acute, reaching its peak when he was opposite the "UFO". But, unfortunately, we have no hard evidence to support this idea.

So we are left with a tantalising UFO episode that baits us with provocative suggestions of bizarre interactions with one of our most revered technological expressions, namely, light and that expression par excellence of 20th century technology — the motor car.

My main hope is that, should such provocative episodes happen again, we would pull out all stops to document it quickly. Then, we might have a better understanding of such occurrences. For now we are left with evocative, haunting, glimpses of something which still seems beyond our comprehension.

The author welcomes constructive dialogue and further information about this case and any other in the class of "physical evidence". He can be contacted at: PO Box 6, Lane Cove, NSW 2006, Australia.

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BRUNO FACCHINI: A FAMOUS ITALIAN CE-III CASE FROM 1950 RE-EXAMINED

Ezio Bernardini

(Translation from Italian)

We are indebted to Dr Roberto Pinotti, Director of the Italian National UFO Centre (C.U.N.) for this interesting follow-up, taken by us and translated (précis) from C.U.N.'s *Notiziaro UFO* No. 104 (March 1985 — January 1986).

The story of Bruno Facchini, the Italian workman who came across a UFO undergoing repairs during a thunderstorm, is a famous classic, already reported by me, long ago, in two different articles in FSR.

It is now no less than *37 years* since it happened, and *12 years* since my last very full and complete account of it, which we published in FSR Vol. 20, No. 6 (April 1975). (Prior to that, on page 4 of FSR 9/2, March/April 1963, I had also given an even earlier résumé of it. There are no discrepancies so far as I can see in the three versions).

Because this interesting case is such an early one, *most of FSR's readers today will not know of it at all.* I am therefore now giving again below the full text of my translation from FSR 20/6, followed by my précis translation of Ezio Bernardini's account of his meeting with Facchini in 1981, thirty-one years after the original experience. — EDITOR

REPRINTED FROM FSR VOLUME 20, NO. 6 (APRIL 1975)

THE CASE OF BRUNO FACCHINI

Antonio Giudici

Our contributor is a member of the Italian National UFO Research Centre (CUN), Milan. Translation from the Italian by Gordon Creighton.

AT 10.00 p.m. on Monday, April 24, 1950, at Abbiate Guazzone (in the district of Varese, Northern Italy) a most singular adventure befell Signor Bruno Facchini, who was 42 years old at that date. A skilful and highly esteemed worker, he was employed by a local industrial firm, and was living in a little house on the outskirts of the town, a few metres distant from the provincial highway leading to Milan.

On the evening in question the region had been swept by a violent storm. Just before 10 o'clock the rain had stopped. Far off in the distance the last flashes of lightning could still be seen, and Bruno Facchini had stepped out of the house to take a breath of fresh air. After a glance at the sky, which was now clearing, he was re-entering the house when his attention was drawn to a peculiar flashing a few hundred metres distant. Here are his replies to the questions which we put to him during our interview:

Question. What happened on the evening of April 24, 1950, when you stepped outside from your house?

Answer. I was just coming back in again when I noticed some strange flashes a few hundred metres or so from the house. As there is a high tension power line passing over right at that spot and a pylon with electrical equipment standing right in front of my house, I immediately thought of the storm we had just had, and of the possibility that it might have damaged the electricity system. So I put on a pair of old boots and decided to go over there and have a look at what had happened. I proceeded with the maximum caution as I was afraid there might be broken power-lines lying about on the ground. When I had got to a point where I was underneath the power-line and I had noticed nothing abnormal, I decided once more to go back indoors.

Question. Why didn't you?

Answer. I was close by the power-line, and everything appeared to be normal and then, just as I was on the point of coming back to the house I saw the strange flashing again, and this time I could see that it was a little further away from where I stood. So I decided to go closer. It was a dark night, but I had no fear, I didn't believe in ghosts. When I did get closer, I caught sight of an enormous black shadow, almost round in shape (it looked like a ball with the top part flattened). In the middle of it I could see a little ladder, and from the top of the ladder was coming a greenish light.

I was now able to have a close view of the source of the flashing, that is, I saw quite clearly an individual who, from the top of a pneumatic lift (of the type made with a base, an extensible shaft, and a platform on top) seemed to be standing and doing a welding job.

> While, so far as we recall, there have been only a few cases in which UFO percipients claimed to have observed entities walking around landed craft and seemingly inspecting the hulls, rarer still are the cases where it is claimed that actual *repairs* were being carried out. We have just given one such case in Ted Bloecher's *UFO Landing And Repair By Crew* (FSR Vol. 20 Nos. 2 and 3).
>
> Here is another remarkable story of the same kind, involving (as we may speculate) an object which may have been damaged in a storm. And metallic material is alleged to have been left by the occupants of the UFO.
>
> GORDON CREIGHTON

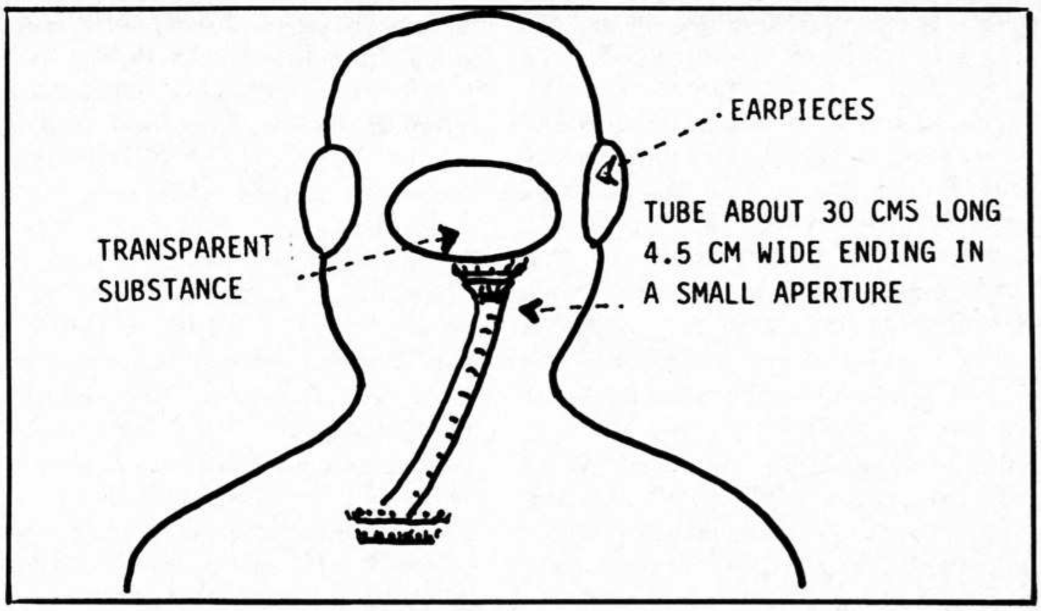
I could see quite clearly that the individual who was welding was wearing a diving-suit and a mask.

My curiosity now aroused, I stepped closer, and now also saw two other individuals, likewise in diving-suits and masks, moving about very slowly around the machine, which caused me to think that the suits they were wearing must be very heavy for them. The machine, which was of a dark colour, showed metallic reflections when lit up by the flashes coming from the welder.

Question. What were your thoughts at that moment?

Answer. I knew that the intercontinental airport of La Malpensa was only a few kilometres from there, and that there were military airfields at Vergiate and Venegono. So I thought I was looking at an aircraft that had suffered a forced landing, and I told the men that I lived close by and asked them if they needed any help. The only reply I got were some incomprehensible guttural sounds.

I tried to guess what their intentions were, and I got the impression that they wanted to invite me to get up into the machine. Then I heard a noise like the sound of a "gigantic bee-hive," or perhaps it might be better to say "like a big dynamo," and I saw, inside, another ladder going up, and all around, on the walls, tubes, cylinders and gauges. In that precise moment I realized that it couldn't be an aircraft, and I was seized by a sensation of panic and fled.



Entity in Bruno Facchini case (From Italian review *"Dischi Volanti"* No. 1, of March, 1960.)

But after I had run a few paces I turned round, and saw one of the pilots grab a sort of camera that he was carrying round his neck and shoot a beam of light at me. I carried on running, and simultaneously I had the impression that I had been struck by a blunt instrument or, to put it better, by a powerful jet of compressed air, and I fell to the ground, landing, for further measure, right on top of one of the boundary stones marking the edges of the fields.

Question. Did you lose consciousness, or did you retain it?
Answer. I felt severe pain from the bruising, but I was perfectly conscious.

Question. What did you see after that?
Answer. It seemed as though they were no longer interested in me. I got the impression that they had wanted to punish me for my disobedience, but I was sure that they did not desire to do me any harm. The individual who had been welding had now come down (the lift on which he was standing had in fact descended, its tubes re-entering) and the two others who had remained on the ground picked up the lift, now reduced in size, put it into a small box and stowed it inside the machine, the ladder was drawn in, and the door closed. Everything became dark. The noise like a beehive continued. Then, all of a sudden, it grew louder, and more powerful, and the machine rose at fantastic speed and vanished into the darkness.

Question. Could it, in your opinion, have been any kind of combustion engine or jet engine?
Answer. No! It wasn't that sort of noise, and I saw no kind of light. To me it seemed far more like an electric motor or one run by compressed air. Something very silent. I don't think anything would have been audible from it after they had reached a height of 500 metres or so. It was certainly a matter of a few seconds, after which all was as silent as the tomb again, and I was standing there alone in the field with my eyes glued to the sky. I couldn't see any moving light. Only the stars shining and glittering sharply in the clear night sky.

Question. Can you give me any further details about the clothing of the pilots?
Answer. They were wearing dark grey (or at any rate it seemed to me grey) diving-suits, which I thought were heavy, in view of the difficulty in movement that I noticed. On their faces they had masks, also grey. I could see a tube hanging down from the level of the mouth and with an opening at the end of it. This led me to think that the tube could be joined to another tube, or to a cylinder. During the brief bursts of light from the welding, I thought I could see that the skin of the face behind the "glass" of the mask was light-coloured. Their form was human, and their height around 1.70 metres.

Question. Do you know any foreign languages? Did it perhaps seem to you that you could understand what language they were talking?
Answer. I know a little French, and during the War I heard German, though not understanding it. But I can rule out those two languages. The pronunciation was in single syllables, and the sound was guttural. When I asked them whether they needed any help, one of them replied with a sound like *"Gurr, gurr!"* Maybe however, the words as they reached me were distorted by the mask. I distinctly noted two large earphones of the type used by radio-telegraphers, but bigger.

Question. On their heads or backs did you notice any antennae such as are invariably shown in Science Fiction?
Answer. No. No signs of antennae or anything similar.

Question. After the strange machine had gone, did you go back to the spot? Did you call other people to see it?

Answer. No. I went home quietly and spent a sleepless night. Next day I returned to the spot to look for my cigarette-case which I had lost. I saw some marks there, not very visible however, as the soil of the meadow, which was under grass, was pretty hard. The marks consisted of four round impressions about one metre in diameter and set in a square, about six metres apart. I also noticed burnt grass, and a few bits of metal, which I picked up, and which were probably the residue left from the welding.

Question. What did you do during the following days?

Answer. I reported the matter to the Police Headquarters in Varese and investigations were carried out on the spot by the Authorities. I had an analysis made of the metal, which turned out to be "an antifriction metal." It was a shiny metal, with a granulous surface. What is more important is the fact that I have never got over the shock that I suffered. Even today, years after, from time to time I feel hot flushes on the face without any signs of fever."

My interview with the witness terminates here. Several other residents of the neighbourhood saw something strange that night, but there is no information as to what.

A few days after the experience, Bruno Facchini began to have pains in that part of his back where the beam of light had struck him, and the area started to turn black. The pain lasted for over a month.

As regards the pieces of metallic evidence found, these were analyzed by the Institute for Testing Light Metals *(Istituto Sperimentale dei Metalli Leggeri):* Report No. 530954/4157 of September 30, 1953: "Examination of Some Metallic Fragments Attributed to a Flying Saucer," wherein it was established that — "... the sample received consisted of three small metal fragments of a yellowish-white colour and with a total weight of 1.64 gms. The percentage results of the chemical analyses made are as follows:

Copper	74.33%	Tin	19.38%
Lead	4.92	Antimony	0.52
Zinc	0.33	Nickel	0.08
Iron	0.02		

plus minimal traces of silver, aluminium, and magnesium. The fragments in question thus consist of a 'leaded bronze' with a high tin content. The micrographic structure appears entirely normal for a bronze of the type in question, in cast state. The presence of no rare elements was detected, nor of any elements generally held to be abnormal for an alloy of this sort. It is very probable that the fragments examined by us came from the packing layer of a very — bearing.*"

*worn? — G.C.

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Translator's Note

My shorter version, published on page 4 of FSR Vol. 9, No. 2 (March/April 1963) agrees on all substantial points with the fuller one given above. I took it from a series of articles on UFO reports in Italy by Renato Albanesi for the *Domenica del Corriere* (Issue of October 28, 1962). — G.C.

BRUNO FACCHINI: A FAMOUS ITALIAN CE-III WITNESS RE-VISITED

A CLASSIC CASE FROM 1950!

Ezio Bernardini

(C.U.N., Italian National Ufological Centre)

(Translation from Italian (Précis)

Premise

On April 24, 1950, at a place called Abbiate Guazzone (Varese region — 45° 49 N., 8° 50 E.), which lies slightly to the east of Lake Maggiore in Northern Italy, the 42-year-old worker Bruno Facchini was the protagonist of a truly mind-boggling experience which, at the time, received widespread treatment both in the Italian regular press and in the *"Rivista Aeronautica" (Aeronautical Review).*

Facchini, a capable and highly esteemed worker, employed at the time in a local firm, was living in a little house on the outskirts of the village, just a few metres distant from the main highway leading to Milano. He had stepped outside from the house at about 10.00 p.m. to take a little refresher (there had been a storm and it had stopped raining shortly before). He noticed a flash in the far distance. As a high-tension power line passes by not far from the house, he

thought that maybe it had been damaged in the storm, so he put on a pair of Wellington boots and, advancing with the greatest circumspection, he went over to a spot beneath the power-line, but found no sign of any broken cable. But suddenly there was a flash again, not far from where he was standing. Going over closer, he perceived an enormous black shadow, almost round, *"like a ball flattened from above"*. In the middle of it there was a small ladder, from the top of which was coming a faint greenish light, and he was now able to see at close hand the source of the flashing. An individual wearing a "diver's suit" and a mask, on top of a sort of pneumatic lift, seemed to be welding something. The hull of the craft, lit by the glow from the welding, gave off metallic reflections. Two other individuals, about 1 m 70 in height, also in "divers' suits", were moving very slowly around the craft, as though hampered by the suits they were wearing. Over their faces they wore masks of the same dark colour as the "divers' suits", terminating at the level of the mouth in a tube with a little opening at the end.

Facchini's first thought was that it was a military aircraft in difficulty (the military airfields of Vergiate and Venegono were only a few kilometres distant), and he went up and asked if he could be of any help. The response was some incomprehensible guttural sounds. Meanwhile, in the interior of the object, he had caught sight of a second ladder, and all around on the walls, tubes, cylinders, and gauges. At the same time, he noticed a noise *"like the sound of a gigantic beehive"*.

At that point it was that Bruno Facchini grasped that he was in the presence of no aeroplane. Seized with panic, he took to his heels.

Turning back as he ran, he saw one of the crew point at him a sort of "photographic apparatus" that he was wearing round his neck, and shoot a beam of light at him. He felt immediately as though he had been struck by a powerful jet of compressed air and it sent him rolling on the ground. Bruised and aching, but perfectly conscious, Facchini then saw the lift descend, bringing down with it the individual with the welding equipment, and then reduce in size until it (the lift) was a sort of small box. Then the crew put it into the craft. The ladder was now drawn in and the door closed. Then the hum that Facchini had heard right at the start became louder and, a few instants later, the craft rose and vanished at a fantastic speed into the darkness of the night.

Next day, Facchini reported the matter to the Police Station in Varese, and the Authorities started their investigations at the spot. On the ground, which was quite hard, were visible four round impressions about one metre in diameter and distant about six metres from each other and set in a square. The grass was scorched or withered, and some small fragments of metal were found at the site; probably the remains from the welding. They were of a shiny metal with a granulous surface which, when analyzed, was defined as "an anti-friction metal", very resistant to heat.

With a view to completing the investigative picture, the journalist Renato Vesco subsequently had an analysis made of a few metal fragments from a piece that Facchini had kept, and which this usually very sceptical journalist had described as "a little bit of Martian bread".

The Experimental Institute for Light Metals were good enough to have a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the fragments done in their laboratories at Novara. I give below the essential portion of the Report as issued by the Institute *(Report No. I.S.M.L. N.530954/4157 of September 30, 1953: Examination of Some Metallic Fragments Attributed to a Flying Saucer)*. Demolishing the repeated rumours concerning alleged "unknown metals, resistant to all chemical analysis" that are so dear to the world of Ufology, the Report established that:—

"The sample received consisted of three small metal fragments with a yellowish-white colouring and a total weight of 1.64 gms. The percential results of the chemical analyses are as follows:–

Copper	74.33%
Tin	19.38
Lead	4.92
Antimony	0.52
Zinc	0.33
Nickel	0.08
Iron	0.02

with minimal traces of silver, aluminium, and magnesium.

The Fragments under consideration are thus of a "lead bronze", with a high content of tin. The micrographical structure seems perfectly normal for a bronze of the type in question, in a cast state. The presence of no rare or abnormal element for an alloy of this type was detected. It is very probable that the fragments presented to us for examination come from the packing bed of a bearing that has had very heavy wear."

* * * * *

It appears that the Varese Police Headquarters had reported the incident, and the existence of the fragments, to the Minister of Defence (Under-Secretary for Air.) In fact (so Renato Vesco wrote) — *an officer in civilian clothes discreetly interrogated Facchini, and showed a very keen interest in the manner in which the "rocket" took off vertically.*

* * * * *

ACCOUNT OF INTERVIEW WITH BRUNO FACCHINI (1981)

1. I went to Abbiate Guazzone this morning, and have just got back, so I shall now set about the task of writing out at once my account of the talk that I have had with Bruno Facchini. As will be seen from what follows, it was a meeting that developed along lines that — both on my side and on his — certainly do not correspond — I recognize this — to the rules of a rigorous method of questioning.

On the other hand, this decision to try to meet Facchini had been taken by me suddenly, in the course of a very few hours, for I had not had even the slightest intention of doing such a thing during the first days of my visit to Como, where I have been on holiday. But, having established the fact that I could get to Abbiate Guazone in a reasonably short time, I found myself unwilling to miss the chance of trying it, despite my original intention simply to have a complete holiday and rest from all activity.

I had first learned about Facchini's experience thanks to an article by the Italian Consul To Brazil, Dr Alberto Perego, that appeared almost thirty years ago in an old issue of the *"Corriere dello Spazio"*, the monthly journal of Astronautics and Aeronautics, at that date under the editorship of Maner Lualdi.

I need not say that Perego's account of the affair experienced by Facchini had stirred my interest greatly and had also left me with a strange feeling. I was fascinated (at that time, in the 1950s, the *"Extraterrestrial Hypothesis"* was much talked about, probably more for emotional than rational reasons) by the experience of this man Facchini who had been so close to a machine and to beings that — in all probability — (and nothing seemed to gain-say such an interpretation at that time, particularly in view of the particular context in which Dr Perego had introduced the affair) — came from another world!

* * * * *

I arrived at about 10.00 a.m., after a journey by train and then by bus, at Abbiate Guazzone, a charming tranquil little village set in a beautiful countryside. Asking my way, I soon found the house of Facchini, and was received at first by his son, a young man in his thirties, who at once warned me that his father *"might not want to talk to me about that business"*.

Facchini Senior however, was listening just behind a hedge. At first he was very brusque, brushing aside all suggestions that we discuss the affair, saying he had enough cares and problems now to worry about. (He had recently been knocked down by an angry bull — a nasty experience for a man of 71 — and it seemed there were damaged ribs that were going to require a visit to the hospital). "I'm sorry you have come all that way", he said "but I don't want to talk about that business..."

* * * * *

But in the end, I cajoled him into talking. There seems to be no discrepancy in his fresh account as given to me. Talking of the appearance of the crew of the UFO, he described to me vividly his amazement when, on the television years later, he saw the American astronauts walking about on the Moon. "THEY LOOKED JUST THE SAME...!"

One thing on which he was adamant was that *they were not "little men". They were of our size and build... just like us, and they could pass anywhere here as men of our Earth.*

He said that the UFO, standing on four supports, was about seven or eight metres high. He also said that he thought the force that had knocked him down was from a jet of air fired at him from an air-compressor.

Over these past thirty years, he told me, a vast procession of people had been coming here to seek him out ... important folk, *"educated people ... engineers, technicians" ... One whom he most particulary recalled was a "big shot" in the Italian Navy who, after hearing his story, looked at him and said: "You are a lucky man! How much I'd have given to have been in your place and to have observed that marvel of Technology!"*

The conversation then came around once more to his present problems and his aches and pains from the accident with the bull. *"What — me! — Lucky?!"*

Then he was talking again bitterly of all the vast upheaval in his life caused by his experience with the UFO, and the long drawn-out physical and mental trauma inflicted on him by the authorities with their endless interrogations, and by the hordes of curiosity-seekers besieging him, and then, on top of all that, all the endless arguments with the journalists, and all the derision he had encountered. "AH! IF I'D HAVE KNOWN ALL *THAT* WAS COMING, I'D HAVE KEPT JOLLY QUIET ABOUT IT!"

But ... he kept asking himself ... "WHY, OH WHY SHOULD IT HAVE HAPPENED TO *ME* OF ALL PEOPLE?!" (A question so often asked by those who have had UFO experiences.)

Then, recalling again the "big shot" from the Italian Navy ... *"ME* A LUCKY MAN!? ... I'D HAVE LIKED TO PASS ON TO *HIM* ALL THAT I'VE HAD TO PUT UP WITH! JUST LOOK WHAT HAPPENED TO ME WITH THE BULL ..." ME! ... WHAT LUCK, OR SUCCESS HAVE I EVER HAD IN LIFE ...?"

One final point about the UFO:— He mentioned that the outside of it had lots of tubes, and that some of the military and civilian experts and technicians who had visited him told him that attempts have been made to

construct similar craft here, but that for various reasons all had been failures ... And he went on (and for the first time I detected a note of pride *in his voice) ... "You must realize that that machine, the UFO, had not only all those tubes everywhere inside and outside, but also two big holes ... and the technical experts have explained to me that, by expelling and compressing the air in the tubes, the UFO could move laterally and, sending the air out through the two big holes, the machine could go up or go down."*

THE CASE AT THE "VILLA RADICCHIA"

Pier Luigi Sani (Italian Centro Ufologico Nazionale — C.U.N.)

(Translation from Italian)

We are much indebted to Dr Roberto Pinotti, Director of C.U.N., and FSR Consultant who has kindly sent us the Italian text of this report, which was published in the recent abstract, *Dossier: UFO Ai Confini Della Realtà*, issued by his Organization. EDITOR

Date of Sighting: Tuesday, October 9, 1984.
Time: About 3.30 a.m. (Solar Time).
Place: Country Villa *"La Radicchia"*, No. 1, Via Tassaia, situated about 3 kms. from the village of Polcanto, in the Commune of Borgo S. Lorenzo. Polcanto lies at about 15 kms. to the NNE of Firenze (FIRENZE = FLORENCE).
Witness: Signor Isidoro Ferri, aged 46, married; two children; profession: caretaker of the Villa *"La Radicchia"* and agriculturalist. Education: elementary (1a middle school).
Meteorological Conditions: Sky clear, stars very visible, no wind. The Moon was almost full during the night from 8 to 9 October (Full Moon on October 10). According to details supplied by the Astrophysical Observatory at Arcetri, the Moon had risen at 5.27 p.m. on the 8th, reaching its highest point over the horizon at 11.27 that night, and it set at 4.32 a.m. on October 9.

The Phenomenon

On the evening of Monday, October 8, 1984, Signor Isidoro Ferri had retired to bed early at about 9.30 p.m., as was his custom. Lying beside him, as was the boy's occasional wont, on the left side of the bed, was his twelve-year-old son Luciano. His wife, Maria, was sleeping in another bedroom with their thirteen-year-old daughter Annamaria who had a slight touch of influenza.

The Ferris' bed is placed longitudinally in the room, with its foot towards the single window of the room, and the head towards the other wall. The bedroom is on the first floor, and on the north side of the house. The window (small) has two sections. The embrasure of the window is 83 cms. high and 70 cms. wide. The sill is 96 cms. above the floor of the room. The height of the bed above the floor is 65 cms., which means that anyone sleeping in it has his head more or less at the same level as the window-sill, and would thus be able to see a part of the field on the other side of the road and opposite the house. There are no external shutters on the window, but it does have internal ones which, however, by long-established habit, Signor Ferri never closes at night, and it does have curtains.

The witness says he is a heavy sleeper, but on the night of October 8/9 something unusual woke him up. This happened about 3.30 a.m. (He deduces this from the fact that, immediately after his sighting, he glanced at his clock, and it was then 3.40.)

The cause of the interruption of his sleep was a beam of light that, coming in through the panes of the window, struck him right on the eyes. Still lying recumbent, he instinctively looked towards the window and beheld, on the top of the escarpment beyond the road (Via Tassaia) a dark human form from which was coming, approximately from the level of the forehead, a luminous beam (like the beam of an electric torch) directed straight at the window and on to his eyes. Ferri was unable to give any details regarding the "human shape", and simply recalls a black silhouette, erect, with arms down the sides, of a height that it is not possible to establish, and of a generally rather bulky frame. The only prominent feature of it was the "headlight" shining from the forehead area. Altogether, the vision lasted no longer than "a fraction of a second". He had in fact just managed to think to himself *"It must be a poacher"*, and the human figure and the beam of light had vanished, and then, a little towards the right, there appeared a luminous phenomenon which he at first took to be a "fire".

"They're setting fire to my hut", he thought to himself. For the presumed "fire" was in fact right in the direction of the little wooden hut used for storing hay located ten or twenty metres beyond the place on the escarpment where the human figure had been. He quickly discarded the idea that it was a "fire" however, since no smoke or sparks were seen, and this "fire" had some strange features: it was 'stationary' (in the sense that no upward spiralling movement of flames was to be seen), and it had a 'pink' coloration, and it consisted of three luminous "squirts" or jets projected downwards towards the ground, and seemingly emanating from a sort of horizontal "dark line" above and to the right of which (from Ferri's position) he was unable to see anything else owing to the intervening leafy branches of trees. The three luminous "jets" resembled "cones of light" with sharp outlines and were broken, as though truncated, before striking the ground. The two side "jets" diverged outwards slightly with respect to the central one.

This second phase of the sighting was, according to Ferri, the longest: lasting several minutes. Still lying there in his bed, he was attempting vainly to find some rational explanation for what he was seeing.

And then suddenly the "fire" "went out", and immediately there began the most spectacular and most terrifying phase of the sighting: from the spot where the "fire" had first appeared to him to be, or maybe from the point where the three "columns of light" had originated (the dark horizontal line), there started to shoot forth a great, vivid, dazzling, intensely white light which, on a descending trajectory (the escarpment where the phenomenon occurred is higher than the villa) *"advanced"* (sic) inexorably towards the house illuminating as brightly as daylight (but, says Ferri, *"to say 'daylight' isn't enough!")* the highway, the trees, and the entire paddock. When the beam struck the front of the villa, it penetrated through the window-panes and flooded the whole room in turn. At that point, Ferri was frightened: he felt a lump in the throat and a flush of heat on the face (perhaps due to emotion). He has described the strange light as "intermittent", but has been unable to specify the precise meaning of this expression. Hypothetically, one may take it that the light might have moved to and fro laterally, or, alternatively, it might have pulsated flashes. Several times, says Ferri, he was obliged to turn his head away or cover his face in order to protect his eyes, which suggests precisely that the light struck him in intermittent waves.

Ferri decided to get up and go over to the window, but did not manage to get there; when he was about half a metre from the sill, he felt himself literally paralyzed, incapable either of moving or shouting. He has not found it possible to say whether this effect was due to the light or to fear, nor how long he remained there frozen: probably it was for a few seconds. Then the light began to "withdraw" (sic): he has described it as being slowly *"sucked back"* (sic) towards the same point (on the escarpment beyond the highway) from which it had been emitted.

Only then did Ferri regain control of his movements, and he was able to approach the window. Bending forward slightly, his hands propped on the sill, he was able to watch, through the glass (he never opened the window), the final phase of the *"reabsorption"* of the light. No sooner had the whole of the light been "sucked back", vanishing like the light of a TV screen when it is switched off, than there appeared, at the same point on the escarpment, an "incandescent sphere" of a vivid red colour and perfectly smooth surface. Ferri was unable to say for sure how big it might have been, suggesting that it might have been some two to three metres wide.

The word "sphere" used by Ferri subsequently turned out to be incorrect: for when he made the sketch of what he had seen, he traced out a *lenticular* shape and not a spherical one. The term "sphere" was presumably suggested to him by the roundness of the upper part of the object that he was observing. Furthermore, there is no denying that the view from window to escarpment is partially obscured by the branches of the trees in the paddock and those on the escarpment; consequently the witness could only see the various phases of the phenomenon through small breaks in the foliage. Consequently it would be permissible for us to think that, when the "sphere" appeared, he was actually seeing a curved structure that was partially hidden by the branches of the trees.

He had trouble with his eyes from looking at the "sphere": its vivid red brightness was so intense as to be unbearable. The strange thing about it was that this brightness *did not spread out around;* in other words, it did not light up the surrounding area, but rather remained *imprisoned,* so to say, within the contours (extremely sharply defined) of the object.

The vision of the "sphere" lasted but a few instants: almost at once the machine rose and flew off on an oblique trajectory towards the WSW (roughly towards Vaglia), travelling up the escarpment of the hill opposite the villa, and finally vanishing beyond its crest. As it took off, Ferri had the impression that the leafy branches of the trees nearest to it shook as though from the effect of a powerful blast of wind. Sound: none whatsoever. On the contrary, he has mentioned a sensation of a *great, unwonted, silence* throughout the entire duration of the sighting. *Even his house guard-dog, an Alsatian shepherd-dog, had not barked once . . .*

Following upon the sighting, Ferri remained stupefied for a few moments and then he recovered somewhat. His first thought was to look at the clock: it was 3.40 a.m. It has not been possible to establish the exact duration of the phenomenon; it can however be estimated at about five minutes.

His son Luciano had gone on sleeping soundly, his head wrapped in the blankets. He had noticed

nothing. Ferri decided not to awaken him, nor to awaken his wife who was sleeping with the daughter in another part of the house, and who, consequently, also had been aware of nothing. Ferri is unable to explain the reason for such a decision on his part. He says he went back to bed, but had been unable to sleep any more.

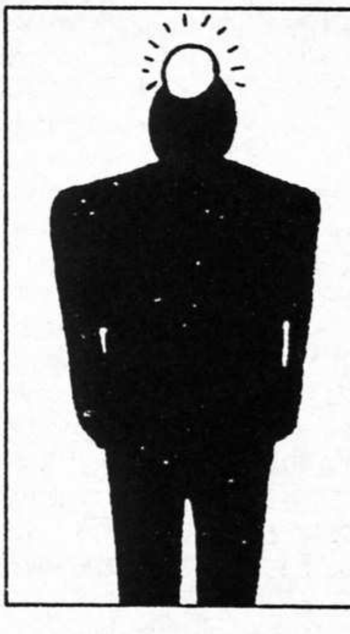
He got up next morning, soon after 6 o'clock, and only then did he tell his wife what he had seen during the night. Signora Maria Ferri, incredulous at first, finally perceived that her husband was not lying, and she was impressed. Ferri went out and up on to the escarpment where the phenomenon had occurred: but he noted nothing abnormal there. The wooden hut was intact, and nowhere even on the ground around about was there any trace of a fire. At about 7.30 p.m. he encountered a friend, a certain Benito Farcilli, a retired inspector of the civic police, now working as a gamekeeper to the *"La Radicchia"* Estate, who cultivates a kitchen-guardian in the vicinity. Ferri told him about what he had seen, and Farcilli advised him to report it to the Carabinieri (Gendarmerie).

So, shortly after 8.00 a.m. Ferri went indeed to Borgo S. Lorenzo and made his deposition at the local Carabinieri Station. At 12.45 p.m. Brigadier Gerardo Ferrentino of the Carabinieri, with a corporal, arrived for an initial inspection on the spot. At 3.00 p.m. the same Brigadier returned, this time accompanied by two uniformed policemen and a man in civilian clothes who acted as though he were their "chief". He it was who discovered the markings; three triangularly placed holes on a meadow on top of the escarpment, a few metres beyond the spot where Ferri had seen the human form. After completing their on-site investigations and enquiries, the police officers left, requesting Ferri to come to Borgo S. Lorenzo in the afternoon to sign his statement. This took place at 5.30 p.m., in the presence of Major of Carabinieri Sebastiano Anzà, of the Borgo S. Lorenzo Station.

The Marks

The marks — or presumed marks — were confirmed by a group of our C.U.N. investigators, Messrs Sani, Boncompagni, and Ricci, when we went there to have a look at the landing site on the afternoon of Thursday, October 11, that is to say, about 60 hours after the happening.

Up on the meadow, beyond the escarpment, at a distance of some 66 metres from the front of the villa, were to be seen three excavated imprints of hemispherical concavity (diameter about 10 cms., depth about 3 cms.), disposed at the points of a hypothetical right-angled triangle. Two of these marks, the most deeply impressed, were on an alignment facing the villa and formed one of the shorter sides of the triangle, being 1.86 m. apart. The third mark, less visible, lay further to the left (as seen when one is standing with back to the villa) and was 1.83 m. from its neighbour, thus giving us a "hypotenuse" of 2.60 m.



The entity at the "Villa Radicchia".

The inner surface (hemispherical) of each imprint appeared as though "polished smooth" by the effect of a powerful pressure exerted on the soil by a smooth, round body; inside of each of the imprints were to be noted blades of grass and pebbles so compressed at the bottom of the hole that they looked as though "stamped".

The grass of the meadow lying within the perimeter of the triangle (we refer still to the date of October 11) was slightly bent in comparison with the grass round about outside. Ferri said that two days earlier, when the Carabinieri arrived, this bending effect of the grass had been much more evident. This detail has been confirmed by the Carabinieri, who, on the other hand, did not pay much importance to this inasmuch as similar areas of bent grass were also to be seen at other spots in the meadow. It should be mentioned that it was raining (drizzle) on the afternoon of Thursday, October 11, and that it had also rained on the previous day.

On October 12 and 13 the site was visited by the Prato UFO Investigation Group, led by Siro Menicucci. They examined the landing-site marks with a Geiger counter and a magnetometer. The results of their instrumental tests were totally negative. No anomaly was discovered either as regards radioactivity or as regards magnetism.

One other item of importance: strangely enough, the least strongly imprinted of the holes was located slightly lower than where the other two were. For, logically, had an object been standing there, one would have expected the opposite to be the case, namely that that hole would have been the deepest.

Effects on the Eyewitness

On his own admission, Ferri remained psychologically perturbed from the experience he had undergone in the night of October 9, 1984, and all those who have been in contact with him and spoken to him during the days following the event have been in a position to verify this for themselves. Signor Farcilli, who met him for the first time on the morning of that same day, October 9, has stated (telephonic interview on November 13) that he found Ferri in an actual and veritable state, as he called it, of "confusedness" (sic.) The Carabinieri, who carried out the investigation on that same day, in their turn were able to confirm this. On the occasion of our own first on-site inspection (October 11) we ourselves noticed that the man was still overwhelmed by tremendous emotional tension. He got over the shock slowly: only when we visited the site for the last time (November 5) — that is to say almost a month since we had seen him first — did we find Ferri in a now normalized psychological state.

During the first three or four days after the occurrence, the witness had disturbance of his vision, in the form of irritation and reddening of the eyes. This trouble, which Ferri has always attributed to the effect of his having seen the "incandescent sphere", was especially troublesome throughout October 9, that is to say during the hours immediately folowing upon the sighting. Farcilli and the Carabinieri confirmed this. However, Ferri did not consider it necessary to have recourse to a doctor, and treated himself with an eye-lotion that he had in the house. On Thursday, October 11, we saw that his eyes were still slightly reddened, but, as he told us himself, it had almost gone by then. When we asked if he had suffered any other sort of trouble (gastro-intestinal disorders, nausea, etc.) he denied it emphatically.

Effects on the Dog

As already stated, the guard-dog at the villa never barked once during the sighting. It is emphasised that, at night, the animal sleeps in a kennel located in the middle of the paddock in front of the villa, and that the entrance of the kennel faces right towards the spot where the phenomenon took place. It is therefore impossible for the dog not to have seen it, and consequently strange that the dog did not react by barking. According to the affirmations of Ferri and his family, the dog in fact *always* barks at strangers, and refuses to let anyone whom he does not know stroke him. His behaviour on the night of the sighting and for a fortnight thereafter was anomalous: for he remained curled up in his kennel almost permanently, sad and subdued, no longer barking at anybody and — an even more singular fact — would let *anybody* stroke him without objection (we ourselves stroked him on the afternoon of October 11). And, finally, the dog absolutely refused all food for several days following the date of the sighting.

Indirect Evidence

Signor Isidoro Ferri was the sole witness to the phenomenon that occurred at *"La Radicchia"*, but in the first daylight hours of October 9, 1984, other people observed something unusual in the night sky, or in the region of Polcanto itself, or in places within a radius of not more than fifteen kilometres to the north of Firenze.

For example, at about 0.40 a.m. on October 9, Emanuele Peris, a young man of 21, was travelling on his motorscooter along the Via Pratese de Sesto Fiorentino, towards his home in Prato, with his friend Franco Marino on the pillion. As they arrived at Calenzano (about 6 kms. to the north-west of Firenze), he observed on his right-hand side (i.e. towards the N.W., in the direction of Monte Morello), at low height, above the roofs of the houses, a "roundish" luminous body of apparent dimensions roughly equal to those of the Full Moon. Astonished, he pointed it out to his friend, and pulled up and switched off his engine in order to have a good view of the phenomenon.

The object had a clear light-blue coloured border, and a nucleus the upper part of which was dark blue and the lower part "yellowish". After remaining stationary for an initial period, the object performed various movements, changing place, stopping again, and changing in shape several times, from the "full moon" appearance at the beginning, and four times, to the shape of a star. The sighting lasted about seven minutes. Finally the object vanished towards the south-east, in the direction of Firenze, from its latter position on the left-hand side of the highway. (When they caught sight of it first it had been on the right-hand side of the road, as stated above.)

At about 1.30 a.m. during the night, a "red flash" was seen at a place called Mulinaccio, on the Via Faentina at about one kilometre to the south of Polcanto. The observer was a lady who is the manageress of the local bar. Before shutting up the premises, she had gone outside to dispose of a bag of garbage. The "flash" appeared suddenly in the north-west, precisely in the direction of *"La Radicchia"* (which, as the crow flies, is about five kilometres from Mulinaccio). The lady paid no importance to it. She says she merely thought to herself of the proverb that runs *"Rosso de sera, buon tempo si spera" ("A red sky at night is the shepherd's delight")*, and that she quietly went back into the house at once.

The most important indirect evidence, however, (inasmuch as it tends to confirm Ferri's account *in a decisive fashion*) is that of a family named Wiechmann, who reside on the Via Tassaia highway, close to *"La Radicchia"*, indeed just a few hundreds of metres from the same. Signor Vittorio Wiechmann, interviewed by

us by telephone, told us that, during the night of October 9, his wife and his mother were awakened by a powerful light shining in through the shutters of the window. The light was so bright that both ladies thought it was already the dawn. But it was in fact about 3.00 a.m. (in other words, says Signor Wiechmann, half an hour before the landing at *"La Radicchia"*). The two ladies did not get out of bed and so did not go to the window to see where the light was coming from.

(Translation from Italian)
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE,
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER
Rome
Date: 21 (illegible on photostat) 1985
Ref. No.: 2/24419/14.1.29/85
SUBJECT: LANDING OF UNCONVENTIONAL AIRCRAFT AT POLCANTO (FI) IN T.E. MILITARY ZONE IN NIGHT OF OCTOBER 9, 1984.

TO: CENTRO UFOLOGICO NAZIONALE
Via Odorico da Pordenone, 36
50127, *FIRENZE*

With reference to your letter RP/001 of January 16, 1985, and the contents of the Report enclosed therein, it is our understanding that the enquiries which have been made of the Authorities concerned with Air Defence, Air Traffic Control, and Meteorology, have produced no elements of significance such as might be corroborative of the occurrence indicated in your letter.

With regard to the arguments formulated in the "Conclusions" of the above-mentioned Report, it is considered that they do not correspond with the reality of the assured facts as ascertained so far.

Accordingly, the statements that there have been persistent violations of the national territory by craft piloted by presumed military spies appear to be devoid of any serious foundation.

By Order of the Minister,
(Signed): Vice-Chief of Cabinet

COMMENT BY C.U.N.:– *"Convenient scepticism"*.

UFO STUDY IN THE USSR

Jüri Lina (Norsborg, Sweden)

Little is known in the West about the beginnings of Russian UFO research. The first sign of such an active interest was a lecture, delivered in Moscow in 1947, entitled *"The Meaning of the Tunguska Meteorite"*, by the engineer and science-fiction writer Aleksandr Kazantsev and the assistant-professor *(dotsent)* Dr Yuri Feliks Zigel'.

Discussing the well-known catastrophic explosion which wrought such havoc in the Siberian *taiga* on June 30, 1908, Kazantsev and Zigel' proposed the hypothesis that the cause of it was an accident aboard an extraterrestrial spacecraft. Systematic work and actual research on UFOs had to wait, however, a few more years, until 1952, when Dr Yuri Fomin, a senior professor of automation at the Moscow Institute of Technology, began to make a study of the *foreign* literature on the subject. Subsequently, in 1958, he started collecting case-reports from the Russian Federative Republic and other parts of the Soviet Union, and he became an exponent of the extraterrestrial hypothesis.

The First Russian Wave

It seems clear that the first Russian wave of UFO reports had already occurred in 1946, when numerous cigar-shaped objects were seen in the skies. There do not seem to have been many more detailed reports until 1954, when a significant "intermediary wave" was registered. This included the well-publicized incident which took place at 4.15 p.m. on November 27, 1954, when people on Red Square in Moscow observed a "cylindrical vehicle" flying at an estimated height of about 300 metres.

In 1959 Fomin was joined in his research by two engineers, B. Makarov and V. Gulikov. They began to give lectures on UFOs at the Moscow Planetarium — a difficult undertaking, seeing that the subject of UFOs was at that particular time coming in for very harsh criticism. A whole series of sceptical press articles appeared, and Yuri Fomin was expelled from the Moscow Political and Academic Propaganda Institute. A hiatus of several years now occurred in Russian UFO research.

Sightings During the 1950s

There were frequent UFO sightings in the USSR during the 1950s, including some by scientists. One of these was the well-known case of Murashov, an Arctic explorer, who even succeeded in photographing an "unknown object of unusual shape, which appeared to be some kind of fantastic flying vehicle". Not a single report of any of these cases was permitted to appear in print.[1]

Recognition in the 1960s

In the early 1960s, UFO activity over the USSR intensified, and the subject was officially, even if disapprovingly, granted some recognition. On January 8, 1961, an article[2] appeared in *Pravda* under the title *"Flying Saucers"*. The author,[3] Artsimovich, ridiculed — as "misinterpretations of real and known phenomena" — Soviet UFO reports that are today openly acknowledged as genuine.

Whereas ten years earlier — in 1953 — all UFO reports (and of course they were all from the West) — were being treated by the Soviet authorities as pure fantasy, by 1963, the USSR Academy of Sciences were starting seriously to collect information about UFOs from the West. *(And in June 1963 they wrote to us asking for FSR! ED.)*

The local Russian reports also began to grow more dramatic. In Moscow accounts of UFOs were published from astronomers at Gor'kiy, at Murmansk, in Kazakhstan, and at Kraków (Poland). In Kazakhstan a huge globe was seen on July 18, 1967, travelling at an estimated speed of five kms. per second, and there were two other similar reports of that same summer.

(Polish publication *"Przeglad Techniczny"* — *"Technical Survey"*, No. 43, October 30, 1977.)

A major Soviet "Wave" in 1966, and first Commission set up

A major wave of UFO sightings that began in 1966 focused greater attention on the subject. The first official Soviet UFO investigation commission, consisting of 45 members, met in the Space and Aeronautics Centre in Moscow on May 17, 1967.

It was headed by Major-General Pyotr Stolyarov[4] and his assistant, Dr Feliks Zigel',[5] who was then a lecturer at the Moscow Institute of Aeronautics and this indicated clearly that UFOs were now considered to be a subject of importance. Simultaneously, a burst of positive press articles about UFO sightings appeared in various newspapers in the Russian Republic, in the Ukraine, in Latvia and in Estonia. And, in a criminological laboratory in the USSR a sample of *"Angel Hair"* from a New Zealand landing was subjected to analysis, but they failed to identify what it was composed of.

The Communist "Backlash" and End of Commission

This open and intense interest in UFOs was apparently disapproved of by the more "conservative" elements of the Communist Party. In due course, an article in *Pravda* of February 29, 1968, branded talk of "flying saucers" as *ignorant fantasy*. It was claimed that there never had been any Soviet UFO sightings, either by private individuals or by scientists. The UFO investigation commission under General Stolyarov was promptly dissolved. And no further UFO reports appeared in the Soviet newspapers. Instead, derogatory articles were once more the norm.

This reaction is highly understandable! For, as Lenin had admitted to the English writer H.G. Wells in 1920: "IF WE SUCCEED IN CONTACTING OTHER PLANETS, WE WILL BE FORCED TO RECONSIDER AND CHANGE ALL OF OUR PHILOSOPHICAL, MORAL, AND SOCIAL VIEWS!"

Dr Yuri F. Zigel' tries again

Despite the sudden chill, UFO research still continued behind the scenes, and over the next decade the situation began to improve again.

In 1970 Dr Zigel' started up another UFO research group at the Moscow Institute of Aviation.

In the years 1977-78 the USSR had its fourth major wave of UFO sightings, following upon which, despite official disapproval, a new special UFO Commission was set up at the Moscow Academy of Sciences.

In January 1979, in the weekly review *Nedelya*, J. Migulin had an article in which he discussed recent UFO cases. He referred to events that had recently taken place in Karelia and other northern regions of the USSR on September 20, 1977, and requested any witnesses of those events to come forward and report their observations.

This was the first occasion on which any Soviet scientist had publicly admitted that there were any "atmospheric phenomena" which he was at a loss to understand. *"Atmospheric phenomena"* had now become the Soviet pseudonym for UFOs.

During the early 1970s, in the Baltic Republic of Estonia (under Soviet occupation) it was even possible to organize public lectures about UFOs under this useful rubric.

A third Soviet UFO research group

Meanwhile, things were moving again in Moscow, and on July 17, 1979, Vladimir Azhazha,[6] a former submarine captain in the Red Navy, set up a *third* UFO study group, in the Popov Institute in that city.

Fourth — and even fifth? — Groups

Official approval for — and even sponsorship of — veiled UFO research arrived in the 1980s. Apparently a secret investigation group was set up at the Soviet Space Launch centre at Baikonur, in Central Asia. Its leader, the cosmonaut Georgiy Gretchko, told Nikita Schnee,[7] a private UFO researcher, that *"the world would be astounded if I could speak freely about UFOs in the USSR".*

On May 29, 1984, the newspaper *Trud* carried an article stating that in February 1984 a *State Commission to Investigate Anomalous Atmospheric Phenomena* had been established. Its head was the Soviet cosmonaut Pavel Popovich. We will examine the activity of this State Commission in more detail later.[8]

Individual operators and private groups

Supplementing the efforts of the various Soviet UFO study groups described so far, there have also been a number of individuals operating privately, and small local groups. Foremost among the private individuals were the geologist Vladimir Avinskiy of Kuibyshev; Kiril Butusov of Leningrad; Nikita Schnee of Moscow; Vadim Vilinbachov of Leningrad; Vladimir Rubtsov[9] of Kharkov; Valeriy Sanarov[10] of Novosibirsk, and Igor Lisevich.

By 1977 the private and semi-official ufologists of Russia had collected nearly 200 reports from the Russian Republic, the Ukraine, and from Central Asia.[11]

Private investigators had traced accounts of sightings going back to the 1920s and 1930s, a period when there were frequent reports of extraordinary, silent, flying machines and balls of light, coming in from people aboard vessels on Russia's largest rivers, such as the Volga.

First Soviet "Humanoid" Report

The first known Soviet "humanoid" report originated from Northern Kazakhstan in the winter of 1936. However, most of the early sightings seem to have been at a distance, and not of great interest.

The Soviet "Waves"

The major "Waves" of Soviet UFO sightings began in 1946, and have usually recurred since at ten-yearly intervals, interspersed with minor "Waves" such as those of 1952-53, and 1962-63. The largest "Wave" occurred in 1977-78, followed by a widespread "Intermediary Wave" in 1983-84.

The Next "Wave"

Soviet Ufologist anticipate that the next "Peak" will be in 1987-88.

Since September 20, 1977, a day on which UFOs were sighted almost simultaneously right across the whole huge expanse of Soviet territory, the collection of reports has been accelerating especially rapidly.

Merely in Moscow on that day, the researchers there received hundreds of sighting accounts, including reports of "flying discs", of "humanoids", and of "close encounters of the third kind".

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY EDITOR, FSR

(1) This statement, I suggest, is not correct. Because both *Pravda* and its companion-paper for the younger age-groups, *Komsomol'skaya Pravda,* of January 8, 1961, carried one of Murashov's photos of UFOs in the Arctic, and I reproduced it in my article *"Saucers Over Russia",* in FSR Volume 7, No. 2 (March/April 1961). Incidentally the article dealt mainly with Professor Artsimovich's savage attack on Ufologists and UFOs.

(2) See Note (1) above.

(3) L.A. Artsimovich was a Member of the august USSR Academy of Sciences.

(4) and (5) On Major-General Pyotr Stolyarov and Dr Yuri Feliks Zigel', see my series of three articles, *Dr Felix Zigel' and the Development of Ufology in Russia,* in FSR 27/3, 27/4, and 27/5. See also the very important book, *The New Soviet Psychic Discoveries,* by Henry Gris and William Dick (pub. by Prentice-Hall Inc., USA, 1978; Souvenir Press, London, 1979).

(6) On Vladimir Azhazha, a former Red Navy submarine captain who by 1979 was serving (how very "interesting"!) as Director of the Section of Underwater Research in the USSR Academy of Sciences, see my note on page 25 of FSR 25/1 (Jan./Feb. 1979) as well as my translation from Russian, on the same page, of a smuggled summary of an important lecture allegedly given by Azhazha and entitled *"Life In the Cosmos".* This paper was circulating in those years in Russia in the "underground *"Samizdat"* (clandestine mimeographed or printed literature). Azhazha (like so many others in Russia, where life is just about as chancy as it was here in Britain in Tudor times) seems to have "come unstuck" later on, and we heard that he was under house-arrest and his UFO study group closed down, and we have heard no more of him since. (A normal story, alas.)

(7) Nikita Schnee, who also seems to have been subsequently liquidated or at any rate converted into an *"un-person",* was the Scientific Secretary of the Section for the Investigation of Anomalous Phenomena in Surrounding Space, a department of the A.S. Popov Scientific and Technical Society for Radio, Electronics, and Communications (NTORES) In Moscow. See my translation, in FSR 27/1 (June 1981), of Nikita Schnee's paper *Ufology in the USSR: An Assessment of the Present Situation* which — amazingly enough! — was actually SPECIALLY WRITTEN for FSR and for the Finnish UFO Magazine ULTRA! (Ah — those were the halcyon times of so-called *"détente".* The KGB, always powerful, were then, however, as we now perceive, far less effective in their grip. One day, sitting here in my home in Hertfordshire, I suddenly took it into my head to telephone Nikita Schnee in Moscow and — *hey presto* — I had him in one second, quicker than I can get London, and we actually talked. That was the first and only time I have ever tried to telephone Moscow! For the sake of the poor chap at the other end I wouldn't like to try to repeat the trick now!)

Nikita Schnee's article on Ufology in Russia was full of highly interesting, indeed fascinating, background material

about the difficulties under which UFO research in Russia had to labour, and about the lectures he and Azhazha had tried to arrange, but it also contained a lot of sniping aimed at Dr Yuri F. Zigel'. (Evidently the same Forces are at work stirring up backbiting and bickering among Russian Ufologists as are "busy on the job"; elsewhere in the world.)

Schnee's descriptions of the machinations of the KGB and the lengths to which they would go in order to thwart the attempts of the Russian Ufologists to convene meetings are positively hilarious.

I wonder where he too is now???? . . . .

(8) Our author, Jüri Lina, fails to return to this theme. I have, however, given a little information on Popovich and his Commission in two more recent articles, viz. *The Russians Again* (FSR 30/4), and *Russian UFO Report: At 4.10 Precisely* . . . (FSR 30/5).

(9) Dr Vladimir V. Rubtsov of Kharkov in the Ukraine, is an old and warm and valued friend and correspondent of FSR of long standing! He sent a good many reports to Charles Bowen from time to time, and in FSR 30/3 we were very happy to publish the latest letter which we have had from him.

(10) Dr Valeriy Sanarov is another staunch and valued old friend of ours in Russia. He is a research worker in the Institute of Chemical and Experimental Medicine under the USSR Academy of Medicinal Sciences, and based at their Siberian branch in the "Think-Tank" city of Akademgorod near Novosibirsk. He has been a reader of FSR for years and is greatly interested in stories of "close encounters", "humanoids", etc. He has even translated into Russian some of my own writings on these themes, but naturally enough such material could only be published in Russia if suitably disguised as *"folklore"!* I have a copy of his excellent paper *"UFOs and Ufonauts in the Light of Folklore"* which, appropriately enough, as one might think, was published in the splendid Soviet Journal of Ethnography *("Sovetskaya Etnografiya")*, No. 2 of 1979!

(11) This figure of "200 Soviet UFO reports" sounds a bit silly, because, more than twenty years ago, when he was passing through London after having been to Moscow to meet the Soviet Ufologists, Dr Jacques Vallée told me that, *at that date*, if my memory is not at fault, the Russian Air Force already had *15,000* UFO reports on file compared with the U.S. Air Force's figure of some 10,000 or so.

TSIOLKOVSKIY AND THE WELLSPRINGS OF UFO SIGHTINGS

JÜRI LINA
(Norsborg, Sweden)

MANY prominent individuals are self-taught, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Edison, and the writer Mabel Collins among them. Such an individual was the Polish émigré to Russia, Konstantin Tsiolkovskiy, (1857-1935), who achieved fame there as the great pioneering rocket scientist. Few know, however, that as early as 1920 he already believed that Earth was being observed by extraterrestrial civilizations, and was theorizing about why they hadn't openly sought contact with us. In some sense he may be considered to be the trailblazer for serious UFO study globally. This side of Tsiolkovskiy's multifaceted work warrants more attention.

Konstantin Tsiolkovsky

The Galactic Spread of Civilizations

"Intelligent beings are found in endless number. ... The spread of life from one solar system to another, even from the Milky Way to other Galaxies, is entirely possible. ... Certainly advanced extraterrestrials possess the means of interplanetary travel," he wrote. J. Fadeyev* comments: "Tsiolkovskiy believed the spread of alien civilizations through the Cosmos to be not only possible, but necessary. ... Having fully utilized its home-planet, a race will, 'colonize its solar system.'" In Tsiolkovskiy's own words, "If life does not spread, but remains tied to its home-planet, it will remain incomplete and fated to a sad end. In the Cosmos undoubtedly exist evolutionarily more developed beings. ... A huge number of planets and other inhabitable bodies are already colonized so that the Cosmos is rich with higher life forms." *He was even a proponent of esoteric views: "Advanced beings mainly colonize*

the etherial plane around stars."†

Tsiolkovskiy's primary concern was contact with these higher extraterrestrials, and their benevolence in accelerating the development of other societies was his main thesis. He assumed that forms of communication could exist of which we have no conception, and believed that cosmic civilizations would have formed interstellar or even intergalactic federations. "What would happen if the earth encountered significantly more advanced beings? Would they use their power to destroy mankind and occupy our planet?" he asked. Still, he thought that advanced non-terrestrial civilizations would not be aggressive. They might not even see any advantage in communication with us. Intercourse with an immature society could bring for it serious difficulties and dangers. Tsiolkovskiy argued that advanced civilizations would observe immature ones unannounced, in order to determine at what point they were ready for interstellar co-operation, and would give help to hasten its arrival. All contact, whether secret and one-sided or open and two-way, was intended to further the primary aim of discovering and increasing co-operation with alien societies for the common welfare of all. In Tsiolkovskiy's opinion, it was not because we weren't being visited by extraterrestrials, but because our civilization wasn't ready for interstellar relations, that we hadn't been approached. Their knowledge, even their very appearance might trigger social turmoil here, doing more harm than good.

Aliens Already Influencing Mankind

Finally, and most importantly, Tsiolkovskiy put forward the hypothesis that advanced alien societies were already, unbeknownst to us, influencing or trying to influence mankind, and felt it to be a necessity that we try to detect this. The greatest obstacle to this search he held to be the traditional human anthropocentrism which still dominates the psyche of many today. "It is difficult for us to accept the possibility of beings higher than those on Earth, whether in evolutionary or technical development," he wrote. "With such a constricted view, we cannot even imagine these other beings intervening in Earth's affairs." Interstellar contact is necessary, but its achievement depends not only on the efforts of extraterrestrials, but even more on those of humans.

Few who study UFOs today achieve such a deep appreciation of the phenomenon as did Konstantin Tsiolkovskiy. The Estonian, Tunne Kelam, is one who has. Furthermore, few who take an interest in the field regard such theorizing as more than subjective fantasy, to say nothing of those who encounter it for the first time. In the face of this, one of Tsiolkovskiy's own characteristic statements seems appropriate in closing. *"Initially there is inevitably idea, dream, and fantasy. Scientific study follows. Only in the end is the idea crowned with proof."*

References and Notes

* Fadeyev, J. *"Tsiolkovskiy as the Father of Astrosociology"*. An essay on Tsiolkovskiy's ideas and on astronautical problems. In: *Mashinostroyeniya,* Moscow, 1974. (In Russian.)

† Note by Editor, FSR

Even at so early a date as the 1920s, we see that Tsiolkovskiy realized that mankind would have to launch into a very serious study of the *"esoteric"* and the *"arcane"* if he hoped to learn anything about the real nature of the Universe. Thus we find him actually suggesting that *"advanced beings mainly colonize the etherial plane around stars"!*

In his lecture in London on June 30 of this year on *"Close Encounters of the Fourth Dimensional Kind",* Dr Jacques Vallée confirmed what many of us (including the late Dr J Allen Hynek) have suspected for a long time — namely that the UFO Phenomenon is probably entirely of "other-dimensional" origin — in other words, *"from right here",* and that the "Extraterrestrial Hypothesis" is nonsense.

Hynek and Vallée are talking the same language as their predecessor, the great pioneer Tsiolkovskiy. — G.C.

RUSSIA'S "POLLUTED ENVIRONMENT"

ARTICLES published in FSR 30/4 and 30/5 dealt at some length with the report of the Moscow newspaper *Trud,* of January 30, 1985, concerning a huge phenomenon said to have been observed by the crews of Soviet airliners operating between Tbilisi (Tiflis, Georgia) and Tallinn in Estonia.

Further information has now reached us from individuals in the USSR who share our interest in matters ufological, and here it is:-

The nice new title which the Soviet Government has selected for its boffins who are researching UFOs is *"The Commission For Research On Anomalous Environmental Phenomena".* This mouthful of a title pleases us enormously, and we hope it will be adopted widely elsewhere and thereby brighten up many drab lives.

In an Appendix, below, we give the names of the Soviet personalities who are reported to adorn this Commission.

The precise date of the alleged sighting of the huge UFO (we had never seen it quoted before) is now established, it seems, as *September 7, 1984.* (The *Trud* report consequently came almost four months after the event).

We are informed in confidence that the members of the UFO research group in Tallinn were never able to

interview any of the pilots involved. The story of how the *Trud* account came to be written is, however, itself highly interesting! The journalist in question, V. Vostrukhin, Special Correspondent of *Trud,* had in fact arrived in Tallinn from Moscow for the purpose of interviewing certain pilots about *another and earlier* sighting, when pilots on a flight from Osel (Saaremaa) to Tallinn, saw something. On reaching Tallinn, however, Mr. Vostrukhin learned from the local UFO study group about this new incident of September 7, 1984.

He therefore went boldly to the Airport authorities, showed them his permit to interview the pilots of the earlier sighting (Osel-Tallinn flight sighting), but, instead, he then proceeded to interview the pilots from the Tbilisi-Tallinn flight!

He then returned to Moscow and telephoned to Dr. Nikolai A. Zheltukhin, Associate-Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences and Vice-President of the new *"Commission on Anomalous Phenomena".* Zheltukhin was however absent in Siberia, so Vostrukhin telephoned to him there, and gave him the details of the Tbilisi-Tallinn case (which were however quite different from what appeared in due course in *Trud!).* He asked for Dr. Zheltukhin's comments on the case and, misled by Vostrukhin's version, Zheltukhin gave them and, furthermore, what was more important, agreed that the journalist might quote his (Zheltukhin's) name in the article, as an Associate Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences!

The journalist had of course also to secure the consent of the Academy of Sciences to his article, but here again he was lucky! For the official whose consent was required was away on a trip to Bulgaria. His second-in-command was therefore in charge of matters and, hearing that Dr. Zheltukhin had already given his consent for the article, he gave his too!

So, what this all boils down to is as follows: no UFO investigators in Tallinn or anywhere else had ever interviewed the pilots about the Tbilisi-Tallinn flight case, and all that we have is the account written by the journalist Vostrukhin (who, it is true, *had* interviewed them).

The result of it all was that there was a row, naturally. The article in *Trud* produced a sensation throughout the USSR, for normally no reports about UFOs are allowed to be published, anywhere in the Soviet press.

The Editor of *Trud* was given "a severe warning", we understand, for his mistake.

(But what about the journalist! We don't hear any more about *him!* Maybe there's just another unnamed mound in Siberia . . .)

James Oberg in the USA has claimed that all these recent UFO reports from the northern regions of the USSR are rocket-launchings, and the Tallinn UFO study group would agree too that some of them at any rate have been precisely that.

Naturally, the question of what precisely the pilots of the Tbilisi-Tallinn and Tallinn-Tbilisi planes saw on September 7, 1984, does not appear to have been established. — G.C.

APPENDIX 1.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE ON
TECHNICAL RESEARCH

(we understand that this is not an office of the Soviet Government).

COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTION
OF THE ENVIRONMENT

this is just one of 14 or 15 such sub-committees under the Central Committee)

COMMISSION FOR RESEARCH
ON ANOMALOUS ENVIRONMENTAL
PHENOMENA*
(known as THE POPOVICH COMMISSION)

*This seems an altogether admirable title, the more one looks at it. Perhaps we are on the way to seeing the UFO critters nailed at last as *pollutants of our Planet!* — G.C.

APPENDIX 2

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION FOR RESEARCH ON ANOMALOUS ENVIRONMENTAL PHENOMENA

Chairman: Vsevolod Troitskiy (Astrophysicist; Candidate-Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences)

Vice-Chairman: Dr. Nikolai A. Zheltukhin (Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences)

Vice-Chairman; Pavel Popovich (Cosmonaut)

Research Secretary: Arvid Mordvin; Sh****dro (Soviet letter torn).
(Ret'd. Colonel of the Red Air Force; Aero-Engineer. Heads the Leningrad UFO Research Group).

G.C.

CE-II ENCOUNTER (?) ON AN ITALIAN CHICKEN-FARM (1982)

Antonio Chiumiento
(President of C.I.S.U., Italy, and FSR Consultant)
(Translation from Italian)

SIGNOR Zulimo Toffoli, 46 years old at the time of the experience (June 1982), is the owner of a chicken-farm at Volpago di Montello (Treviso Province, N.E. Italy). The place is some 17 kms. to the N.W. of the Provincial Centre, Treviso, and stands at 94 m. above sea-level, on the southern edge of the Montello mountain area. Toffoli himself lives at Susegna, to the north, but at certain times of the year it is necessary for him to spend whole nights at the chicken-farm, in order to check instruments, temperature, etc., and the UFO incident we are going to report, involving remarkable electromagnetic phenomena, occurred on one of these nights in June 1982, though when I interviewed him recently he could no longer recall the precise date.

The "Event"

The three sheds containing the fowls are linked up by an alarm-system which registers changes in temperature, warns of electrical malfunction, etc.

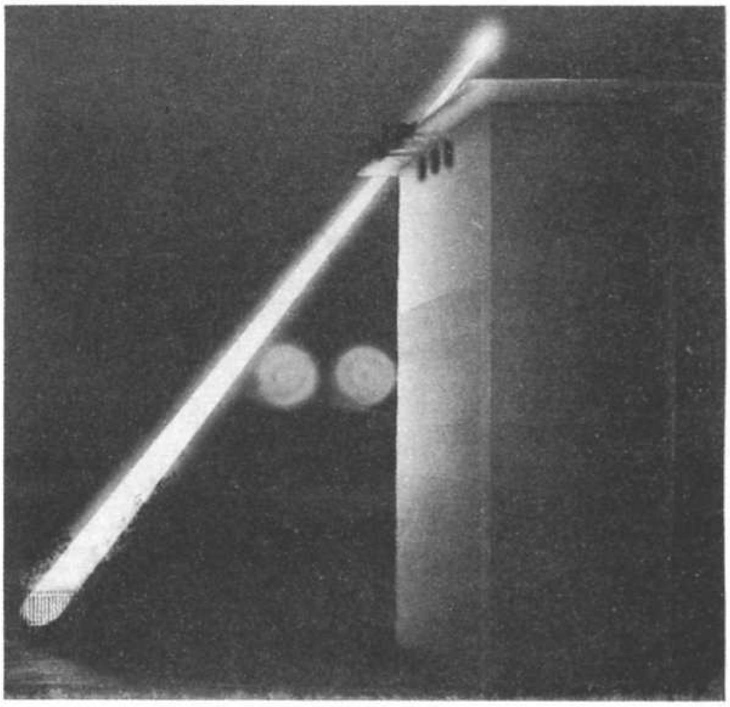
On the night in question, Toffoli was at the farm. Suddenly, at about 4.00 a.m., the alarm started to ring in one of the sheds, so he went to investigate. Stepping out from the shed where he had been sleeping (the middle one of the three), he immediately noticed that, near the electricity-inspection cabin, there was a *beam of light* shining towards the barred entrance-gate. The gate was shut but, a little way out beyond it, he perceived *"two red spirals"* which were rotating, and seemed to be "pointing at him". It was dark, and Toffoli, still drowsy, thought that this was someone who had come looking for him and was waving a pair of electric torches. He had in fact an interphone, but it had suffered some damage during a storm a few days previously, when it had been struck by lightning.

The beam of light was steady and motionless the whole time, and the alarm continued to ring loudly. So Toffoli made for the shed standing nearest to the electricity-inspection cabin and to the gate.

The alarm was giving warning of a fall in temperature — something totally unusual in June! Unusual also was the fact that the alarm had sounded in only one shed, since all the instruments were set to indicate the same danger-levels. So that the alarms installed on the other two sheds ought to have gone off too.

More worried of course about the cause of the breakdown (for he had once lost his entire stock of 50,000 chickens a few years previously for this very reason) than about the strange lights, Toffoli first switched off the alarm, and then went over towards the electricity inspection-cabin to investigate the peculiar beam of light that was shining down on the gate, and the "red spirals" which he had at first thought seemed to be "aimed" at him.

The two red spirals were rotating, and there seemed to be a *dark mass* stationary directly above the inspection-cabin, and this mass seemed to be the



The Phenomenon on The Chicken Farm.

source of the beam of light, though he couldn't be sure on that point.

The beam of light was of a yellowish-white colour; "true light" (we assume that by this Toffoli means that it was "like daylight". G.C.), and it was coming from a point several metres above the electricity inspection-cabin, and was stationary throughout, whereas the red spirals, rotating close together, were spinning on their own axis. At least, such was Signor Toffoli's impression.

But the idea he had in his head was still that somebody was looking for him — possibly to play a joke

on him (certainly not a very pleasant sort of thing, given the lateness of the hour), nor was there absent from his mind the thought that they might be thieves.

So he shouted a few times in the direction of the light, but there was no response.

After three or four minutes had elapsed from the start of his observation, he saw the beam of light "go out", and the spirals likewise vanished, and the large black mass situated slightly above the inspection-cabin moved away towards the west, in the direction of Montebelluna. At that moment, a faint hum became audible, of which he says he was not sure whether or not to ascribe it to that strange dark mass that had presumably been stationary right over the inspection-cabin.

The two spirals, which had impressed themselves so forcibly upon his attention, were described by Toffoli as "ribbon-like", and of an intense red colour, and possibly between 20 cms. and 30 cms. in diameter — that is, at their widest. And they were at a height of some six or seven metres above the ground.

Moreoever, they caused him to feel slightly dizzy, possibly because of their "circular movement", but the eyewitness is quite sure that these spirals were in no way the result of his brusque awakening, because they appeared to be real, and not the product of some hallucinatory phenomenon.

Going back again to check on the cause of the alarm, Toffoli discovered that the temperature in Shed No. 1 which had been set for a maximum of 20 °-22 °, and a minimum of 18 °, was actually now *below* the latter figure, although he was unable to determine exactly how much it was.

And — let us repeat — that is something pretty queer for that season of the year! For we are in *June*, a month in which, as the statistics show, what happens is usually the very opposite. But even stranger than that is the fact that only the alarm of Shed No. 1 had sounded — namely the shed that is nearest to the gate and to the electrical inspection-cabin, and consequently only about six or seven metres distant from the phenomenon observed by Toffoli.

The "dark mass" that he saw right above the inspection-cabin immediately after the light beam and the "spirals" had vanished ("switched off like lights", as he put it) is described by Toffoli as follows:—

"A machine, a vehicle, positioned high up, a bit obliquely, four or five metres long, and two metres wide."

When the "machine" moved, the witness heard a hum, but not a sound that was bothersome: "rather like that of a mosquito".

When the phenomenon had vanished, Toffoli went back to bed, but did not manage to sleep. He lay there wondering how to grasp the nature of the fault that could have caused the alarm to go off, and once more fully convinced that what had happened must have been due to the action of somebody who had come looking for him and had been waving a couple of electric torches in order to catch his attention. Alas, nothing has ever been ascertained subsequently that might confirm such a conviction!

(In his testimony, Signor Zulimo Toffoli revealed the typical embarrassment seen in this type of person who, previous to the event, have never had any sort of close approach to our subject, and *"didn't believe in UFOs"*, and who are considered by those who know them as very little inclined towards any sort of concession regarding the problem.)

We are left, then, with the facts of the sighting: the observation of two strange red spirals, a strange conical shaft of light, and a strange dark mass that moved off westwards and presumably emitted a hum.

No other anomaly was noticed; the fowls themselves were not disturbed by the episode, and no strange manifestation was observed during the days following.

Hallucination?

The case furnishes occasion for various considerations, especially from the psychological point of view, which at first sight might seem to be almost the obvious one. And our attention has been drawn to the fact that indeed this sighting does present some of the features of an *hallucination.*

It is not for us to say, but it is indeed very probable that every one of us, at some time in the course of our lives, may have had some hallucinations. Hallucinations can be due to a great number of causes: drowsiness (which it could be in our present case); excitement; hypoglycaemia; delirium; fever; psychoses; deprivation of sensorial stimuli; stimulation by lights or electricity; hallucinatory drugs; alcohol; carbon monoxide; and, leaving aside the type of stimulus that produces hallucinations, it is a known fact that the human brain seems to respond to certain well determined and schematic parameters.

Fundamentally, there are four images which recur with the greatest frequency in hallucinatory experiences: namely *lattices; spiders' webs; tunnels;* and — precisely — *spirals.* These features, linked with the fact that we are dealing with the testimony of a single witness, and moreover of a witness in a state of altered consciousness (brusque awakening, and hence drowsiness) seems to point towards an interpretation of *this type.*

On the other hand, an objective confirmation for the story is furnished by what would appear to be an "efffect" induced by the presence of the phenomenon itself: namely the fall in temperature and the consequent triggering of the alarm, and only in the one particular hen-house which was nearest to the phenomenon. For these reasons, therefore, it is our opinion that, over and beyond the point of discussion provided for us by the episode, it is not acceptable that this report be shrugged off with rash and foolhardy explanations which, in our view, have no basis in the facts of the situation.

Nevertheless it is certain and it is desirable that the work of collecting case-material should not be confined to a mere chronicling of the facts, but must examine closely and profoundly all possible causes of the phenomenon — a complex phenomenon which consequently involves an organic study, inasmuch as, amid the myriad welter of reports, *unquestionably something real did happen.* ...

THE "FLYING MAN" AT CASTELLEALE (ITALY)

Gianfranco Lollino
Field Investigator for C.U.N. (Italian National UFO Study Centre), Firenze.
(Translation from Italian)

We are indebted to Dr Roberto Pinotti, General Secretary of C.U.N., for sending us the text of this report, due to appear in C.U.N.'s journal *"Notiziaro UFO"*, No. 106/1987. EDITOR

This strange affair occurred in November 1974 in a tiny hamlet of a few houses, Case di Mordano, near the village of Castelleale, lying deep in the rustic countryside of Romagna Province in northern Italy. The eyewitness was a woman aged 42 at the time and named Signorina Giovanna Sensoli. Miss Sensoli, whose address is Case Mordano 5, Castelleale, has had no education and is illiterate, of a peasant family. (But, be it noted in passing, she has good health and has 10/10 vision.)

This case has been repeatedly and thoroughly investigated by me over a long period of time, involving several return visits there, due both to the interesting nature of the story itself and also to the fact that several unpleasant happenings, including a number of deaths, have befallen the Sensoli family during the period of our enquiries (1976-1983).

Our first interview with Miss Sensoli goes back in fact to November 1976, when we were able to secure a taped recording of the happening. However, it was not a very satisfactory tape, as we found in due course, owing to the number of confusing voices heard on it and the failure to prepare a proper statement. Moreover, I had some friends there with me at the time who, although interested enough, did not help to secure a good recording.

The Account

Here is the story:—

"It was about 5.30 p.m. on a day in mid-November 1974. As was my usual wont, I was attending to the animals in the farmyard beside the house, when I was struck by their strange behaviour. Chickens and rabbits were running about as though terrified and hiding in any corner they could find. I looked around to see what was going on, and noticed some of the fowls were looking upwards. So instinctively I did the same, and, to my great astonishment, I saw, hanging in the air above the house, at roof-top height, and about four metres from me, a "man", who was seated on a box that was swinging to and fro and who was looking around as though seeking something.

"He was big — about 2 metres in height — and dressed in a very shining one-piece garment with green, red, and white markings, and in a pair of skiing boots with square toes and square heels.

"His features seemed to be dárk, but a helmet with visor covered his face, and I only managed to see his eyes, more or less like ours, and to tell you the truth we gazed at each other for a brief instant.

"Well, this man was hanging there in the air above the house and rocking to and fro, with one foot stretched down towards the roof as though he wanted to support himself on it. From the "box" (which was about 50 cms. deep and about the same width — I don't know how long —) there was a rod sticking up, a rod with coloured stripes. It must have been the control-handle for the motor, and it gave out a sharp hum that I could hear very clearly.

"A bit disconcerted at the sight, I shouted several times to my mother, but she didn't reply at once. Meanwhile, maybe because of my shouts, the man had moved away slowly eastwards across our threshing-floor area, which is 20 metres wide. I went over in the same direction, and, looking in the same direction to which the man was looking, I saw a very vivid light, as big as the Full Moon, coming from the North and also slowly moving eastwards.

"As soon as I caught sight of it, I was overcome by a wave of heat. And, although there was a bit of mist at the time, the whole place around, the house and the threshing-floor, were lit up vividly for a few seconds like bright daylight.

"After passing across the threshing-floor area, the man halted above a flat-topped hayrick, as though going to land on it. I approached him once more, puzzled by his incomprehensible gestures, and once

more we were staring at one another, this time at a distance of about three metres (this being the height of the hayrick).

"A few instants later, he departed, heading eastwards, with that light following at a distance behind him.

"At a bit over a kilometre or so in that direction lies the small cemetery of San Clemente, located on a hill. I watched the two objects — the man and the light — circle several times around the cemetery, and halt for a few seconds over it. Meanwhile, my mother had finally come out, and I showed her where to look, but she, not knowing what had happened, simply said *"It must be a parachutist!"* She was merely able to make out *something* in the distance, but unfortunately without being able to discern any actual details that might confirm my testimony.

"I did not see the light again, but the man must surely have dropped down into the cemetery and have spent the night there.

"The whole thing lasted about fifteen minutes."

This declaration was never signed by Miss Giovanna Sensoli, despite all my demonstrations of good faith, owing to her fear of some sort of subsequent bad repercussions for her.

I had first learned about the case from my friend Giuliano Tonini, whose wife, along with her relatives, had already known the Sensoli family for a long time and had been in the habit of visiting them, in view of their mutual interests as farming people.

That was in 1976, and I made my tape-recording with Giovanna Sensoli a few months later, in November 1976, two years after the happening.

It was on an afternoon during the grape-harvesting period in 1976, which we spent with the Sensolis, that Giovanna decided to tell me the story. This may have been out of a desire to confide her secret to somebody, or it might have been due perhaps to her being prompted to it by some conversation or something she had heard. (Members of the family of Tonini's wife subsequently made enquiries in an attempt to ascertain what precisely had induced Giovanna Sensoli to "talk", but they never got anywhere. All that they did manage to arrive at, in their subsequent discussions on the matter, was the decision that they were all in absolutely unanimous agreement that Giovanna Sensoli's story was genuine — and was also terrifying. Moreover Tonini's family, who have all known Giovanna for many years past, all assured me that she was totally reliable and serious.)

Further Investigations

After having made my tape-recording of Giovanna's story and having listened to it, I felt dissatisfied with it as insufficiently good evidence, and in the winter of 1978 I decided to try to have a series of fresh interviews with her, but without a tape-recorder, having noticed a certain amount of fear and reluctance on her part. And this we duly did, on August 15, 1980.

(The accompanying sketch was made after this interview of August 15, 1980, and subsequently we asked Giovanna to give us answers to a number of further specific questions which would have helped us to secure a much more accurate drawing. But she never replied to them.)

Then, as already stated, between 1980 and 1983, a series of very serious disasters struck the Sensoli family, and it became impossible for me to push our enquiries further. I was able to visit Castelleale again in June 1982 and in May 1983, but only to take photographs of the site.

On my last visit (May 1983) I did not manage to see Signorina Giovanna, as she was busy out in the fields. But her father, who is confined to a wheelchair having had both legs amputated, claimed not to recognize me any more, and called on the neighbours to come and help get rid of me.

I explained my position, and explained the photographic equipment, which frightened the father so much. And only then was I finally able to learn how Giovanna had been heard shouting at the time of the sighting in November 1974, and to hear the details of her own first account of the close-encounter, as related by her to them a few weeks later.

Unfortunately of course their fears of making any unusual revelations — which had induced them to keep silent or to hide away during my visits, or may be also the long lapse of ten years that had occurred — meant that their statements could be of little use to me. Nevertheless, they did confirm for me various details regarding the "identikit" description of the "flying man" absolutely in accordance with what Miss Giovanna herself had said.

Statement by Neighbour

I give below what I managed to learn during that last visit of mine in May 1983. The speaker is one of the neighbours in the house, talking to me in the company of his wife and of another lady who had come running up when she had heard the shouts of Giovanna Sensoli's *father:—*

"Giovanna told us that one evening, when she was seeing to the chickens in the yard, she saw a quite large man come flying over and put one foot on the roof of the house. He was sitting on a seat or box, I don't remember the details very well. He was dressed in an overall with coloured markings and a helmet covering his face. I remember that she spoke of *"big eyes"*, and *two big "cows' teeth"* sticking out from under the visor of the helmet, which terrified her greatly. That evening, in the winter of 1975 or 1976, we don't recall when exactly, we heard Giovanna shouting to somebody of her family, maybe her mother, to come, but we ourselves didn't see anything.

It wasn't until a few weeks later that she told us what I have just told you!"

(Despite the incredible nature of the story, the neighbours say they all believed Giovanna, whom they all consider most trustworthy.)

The various aspects of this case at Castelleale give rise to a number of extremely interesting considerations relating to the socio-cultural framework and background of the eyewitness.

If, in the course of a ufological investigation, such factors as the conditioning by mass-media, questioning by outsiders, materials read, plus any other sort of means that might in any way modify a piece of testimony, all play a decisive and determining role, THEN, IN MY OPINION, HERE IN THIS AFFAIR AT CASTELLEALE, WE ARE CONFRONTED WITH A TOTALLY "UNPOLLUTED CASE".

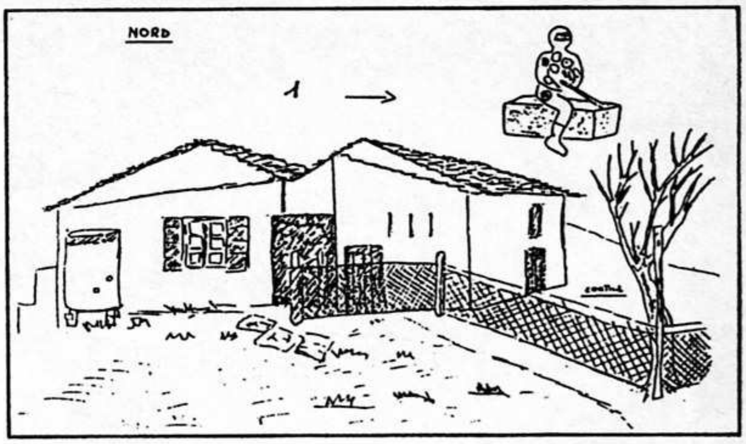
Let us just consider a few aspects. Peasant life, such as it is in all its aspects, bound strictly to the astronomical and meteorological cycles of the agricultural year, getting up at sunrise and going to sleep at sunset; plus the prevailing illiteracy due to social conditions and the exigencies of the labouring life; the utter and total absence of all those cultural amenities so dear to us: all of this, I say, renders it totally impossible to consider any sort of premeditated fraud on the part of Giovanna Sensoli. I believe that the peculiarities inherent in the case and also the ufological elements in it are such that they cannot possibly have emanated spontaneously from Giovanna Sensoli.

Naturally of course nobody can absolutely guarantee that at some moment along the way, something or somebody may not have been able to precondition Giovanna Sensoli so profoundly that she has never displayed any contradiction whatsoever in the details of her story over a span of eight years, but if we consider the purely *technical* elements that are present in the case, we shall realize that these are quite numerous — particularly for anybody like Giovanna who is totally unaccustomed to such things.

And another interesting aspect, and worthy to be noted by us, is the type of interpretation placed on this affair by Giovanna herself. For in fact it represents a complete corroboration of those sociological considerations already touched upon by us above.

To the question: "And what do you *yourself* think about all this?" Giovanna declares with conviction:—

"Both of them (the 'flying man' and the light following him) went down into the cemetery and stayed there all night."



The "Flying Man".

Well — a "spiritualistic" explanation (if perhaps we may call it such) is certainly no novelty to us in the case-records of Ufology, and assuredly comes as no surprise for us. And once again I insist on emphasising the close link between the eyewitness's testimony and all those typical religious traditions and preconceptions which are still present, everywhere, in our deep Italian countryside. Not with a view to indicating any conclusions — such not being our intent — but simply in order to underwrite that impression of *absolute good faith* which was with me throughout in all my meetings with Giovanna Sensoli.

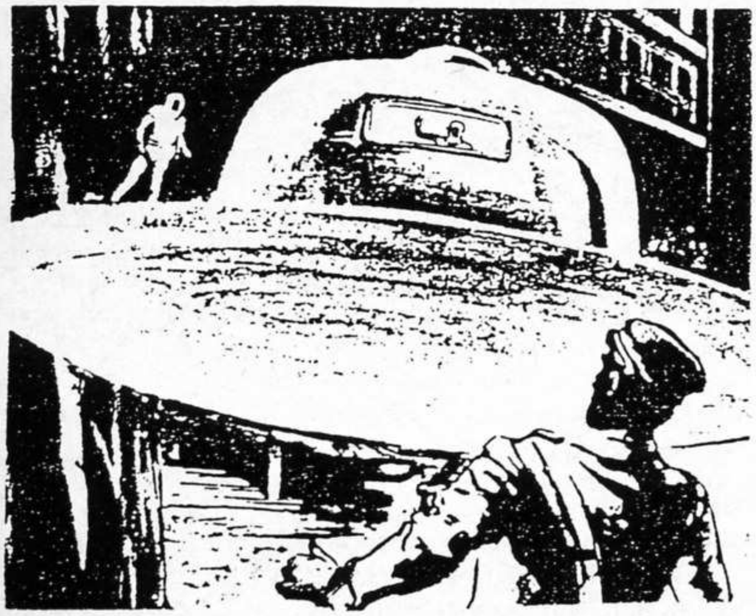
It is true that, in individuals who are particularly disposed in such a direction, there might exist a need to "see" certain specific things, particularly when there is involved within it a conditioning which I would define as "religious". But it is also true that in such cases the phenomenon is generally explained in the other, more strictly "spiritualistic" fashion.

NOTE BY EDITOR, FSR. Weird as this story is, the student of our subject will find not a few that resemble it quite closely in some respects if he wades through the vast body of material that has accumulated in the past forty years.

"MARTIANS IN MILANO"

In a preprint which he has sent us of issue No. 106/1987 of his journal, *NOTIZIARO UFO*, Dr Roberto Pinotti, General Secretary of C.U.N. and FSR Consultant, draws attention to the following case, which was reported in the Italian press on December 19, 1962, and which describes the alleged sighting of a disc, with occupants, right inside the city of Milano. (A case very similar, in fact, as Dr Pinotti points out, to his more recent *"CE-III Encounter in Firenze in Summer 1985"*, which we have just published in FSR 32/3.) EDITOR

(Translation from Italian) "Marziani" A Milano Milano, December 18, 1962.



'Martians' in Milan.

"About a metre in height, dressed in a one-piece fluorescent silvery suit and with metal helmets on their heads, they descended (so says a night-watchman) in the yard of a warehouse . . ."

The night-watchman Rizzi, aged 36, appeared this morning at the Police Station, accompanied by his Section Chief, Mario Pochintesta, and told the Duty Officer a strange story of Martians and flying saucers which he said he had experienced.

Rizzi says that last night (at 2.20 a.m.) he went to the warehouses of the CASCAMI SETA Textile Plant, as was his habit, to set three electrical control clocks.

Then he went out of the warehouse into the yard, from where he could hear a strange noise, like a drawn-out whistling. But, on reaching the door, he had a terrifying surprise:

"In the yard" — so goes his account — "At about three or four metres off the ground, there was a metallic-coloured flying saucer about five metres wide. On the upper part of it I saw two illuminated port-holes. I stood there as though paralyzed with fear. At a certain moment one of the port-holes opened, and a strange individual, about one metre high, came out, wearing a silvery fluorescent overall, with a dark-coloured metallic helmet on his head. The little man made some signs to me with his hand and then re-entered the disc, which vanished in a few seconds."

The terrified Rizzi told his workmates about it, and also his Section-Chief, Pochintesta, who then accompanied him to the Police Station.

ANOTHER "OBSERVING EYE" IN THE HOUSE?

Graham Conway
(British Columbia). FSR Consultant

A small boy aged 6½, whom I shall identify as "J.L.", who resides here in Vancouver and whose family are known to me, recently had a strange experience of this same kind.

At about 4.00 a.m. one night, between October and December of 1986, "J.L." got out of bed to go to the toilet. The boy has never had any fear of the dark. Consequently he made no attempt to turn on any lights. The journey was a short one, and, on his return to his bedroom, he had to pass the living-room. To his surprise, he saw a light, the size and shape of an orange, "floating" at about the level of the sofa in the living-room.

He described it as "like a shining star", with a steady glow that illuminated the chesterfield (sofa). A beam of light appeared to be projected upwards from the "star", while, on the right-hand side of it, there was a protrusion that might be likened to the handle of a cup.

For some reason, "J.L." felt himself "drawn to the light". But, becoming scared, he resisted its magnetic attraction, and hurried to his parents' room and joined them in bed.

On being questioned about the affair by his father the following day, the little boy said he thought he only watched the light for a very short period of time. He was unable to recall any sort of sound or smell associated with it. He subsequently displayed no sign of any form of illness, physical or mental, that could have resulted from his encounter with the phenomenon.

It was established that the vertical blinds in the living-room were in the closed position, so that no outside light could have been projected into the room.

The case is however interesting for other reasons. The boy had already told his father that he had seen a flying saucer outside of his grandparents' house in North Vancouver shortly before (in Septmber 1986).

The child possesses the ability to read his parents' minds, and says that in his dreams he "flies in Space". There is also evidence that his father, along with five other people, experienced a considerable *time-loss* while watching a UFO near the Tungurahua Volcano, in the region of the town of Cotalo, in Ecuador, in March of 1976. (The father is Chilean, married to a Canadian woman and domiciled in Canada.)

ANGIE'S CLOSE ENCOUNTER ...

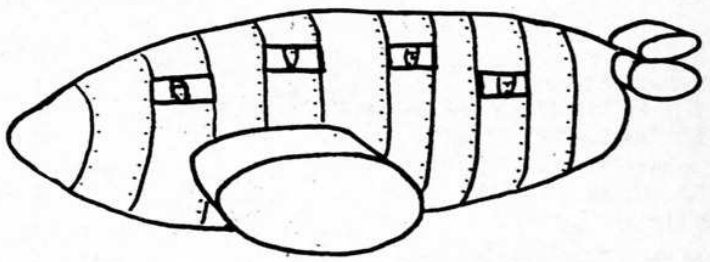
According to a report in the *Bournemouth Advertiser* of January 26, 1984, a young girl, Angie Till, has revealed that four years previously, when living at Coleshill in the county of Dorset, she had seen a huge cigar-shaped object glide past the window of the lounge. Accompanied by her parents, David and Susan Till, she rushed out of the house but the object had vanished.

She said: "I was looking out of the window when this big object glided by at about walking speed. It was the size of a bus, and very close. Four purple-bearded occupants were looking at me. My younger brother Chris was in the room, taking a book off a shelf, but when he turned round it had gone. I don't know what it was, but I believe there is life on other planets."

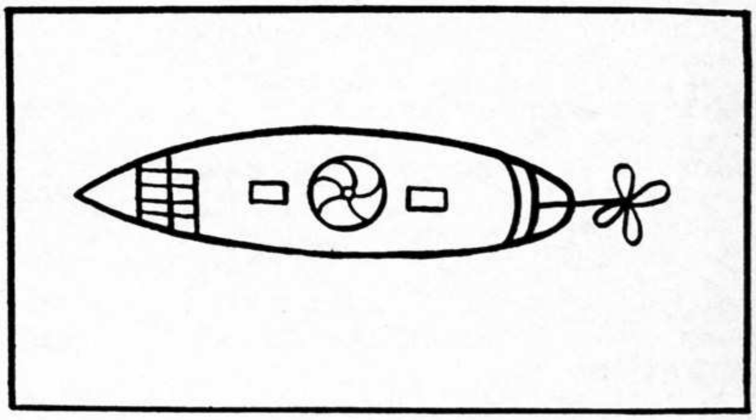
Her mother commented: "She seems convinced about it, and she's normally pretty level-headed".

The newspaper went on to mention another UFO that occurred some seven years earlier near Leigh Lane, Coleshill, about a quarter of a mile from the home of the Till family. A Mrs Val Newman (now Mrs Hanney) and her late mother, Mrs Edith Guildford, said they heard a *humming noise* outside the house. The following day, they found a 20-ft.-wide *flattened circle* in the grass of the field behind their home, with four holes sunk in the soil at the perimeter.

(Credit and thanks to FSR reader Mr. F. Turner of Cheshire.)



Angie Till's father, David, made this sketch from her description of the UFO.



A newspaper reporter's sketch of an airship which passed over Nashville, Arkansas, late in April 1897.

MAIL BAG

Correspondents are asked to keep their letters short and give full name and address (not necessarily for publication). It is not always possible for the Editor to acknowledge every letter personally, and so he takes this opportunity to thank all who write to him.

Huge UFO Also Over China

Dear Editor, — With reference to the huge UFO reported to have been detected over North-East Spain in November 1985 (FSR Vol. 32, No. 1), it is interesting to recall that in the same year, at 10.40 p.m. on June 11, 1985, a Chinese *Boeing-747* aircraft was reported to have encountered a large, bright UFO over Gansu Province (N.W. China).

The Beijing-Paris flight, No. CA933, was at 32,800 feet when the crew spotted the "walnut-sized light, brighter than any star".

Captain Wang Shu-Ting said: "Its brilliance extended for some 40-50 kilometres, and it was about 10 kms wide. An extremely bright spot was visible at its centre."

The object was seen in the area of sky over Lanzhou (Lanchow), the capital city of Gansu Province, and, "travelling extremely fast, paced the aircraft in a southerly direction for about two minutes".

None of the plane's instruments were reported to have been affected in any way.

Yours sincerely,
Graham Conway,
11102 River Road,
Delta, British Columbia,
Canada, V4C 2S4,
February 23, 1987.

*A later Chinese report (*Daily Express, *London, March 19, 1987), sent in by Dr Bernard Finch, describes another UFO, "shaped like a straw hat", seen over Chengdu (Ch'eng-Tu), Western China, by more than twenty witnesses at around midnight (GMT 1600) on March 7, 1987. It was reddish-orange in colour and thought to be at a height of 3,000 ft, and visible for about half an hour. Luo Jin-Cheng, a 17-year-old student, said the UFO made a noise like an aircraft, and that he felt upset and dizzy for some time after the sighting.*

Spanish News Agency reports of January 13, 1987, similarly mention a huge UFO seen near Tel-Aviv, in Israel, by an Israeli Police detachment. — EDITOR

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